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NEW

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DIANA: WAS IT MURDER?

WEEKEND

Russian spy at UN inspectors' hotel

Iraq and the Basingstoke connection

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A BASINGSTOKE hotel was the focus of a Russian spy's attempt to thwart the surprise inspection of a suspected Iraqi weapons site. It was alleged last night.

The incident was apparently one of several in which Russian intelligence sought to tip off Iraqis about the activities of the United Nations weapons inspection team.

On this occasion, in the summer of 1996, about 50 inspectors from the United Nations Special Commission (Unscorm) had gathered at the Hampshire hotel for a training and preparation session before leaving for Baghdad. During their brief stay, one of the team recognised a Russian official who spent every evening trying to debrief Russians in the Unscorm party.

The official turned out to be the chief "resident" in London of the foreign intelligence service, SVR, formerly the First Chief Directorate of the KGB. And when the inspectors eventually arrived unannounced at the suspect site, they found their way blocked by Iraqi troops.

The Basingstoke connection emerged during an unofficial CIA briefing given to the security specialist reporter on *The Washington Post*, who disclosed yesterday that the SVR had also been operating against Unscorm in New York, where the inspectors have their headquarters.

The American newspaper report might be said to have appeared at an opportune moment, embarrassing the Russians who strongly oppose military action against Iraq. However, the intriguing suggestion that Russian intelligence officers spied on Unscorm officials goes a long way towards explaining President Saddam Hussein's un-



inspections to appear to a "key player" in monitoring Saddam's activities while also enjoying a position of influence over the way events developed. And while it cannot be in Moscow's long-term interests to allow Saddam to have weapons of mass destruction, the Russians still have a huge appetite for "playing the game", particularly in the Middle East.

The key figure in the current power-broking is Yevgeni Primakov, the Foreign Minister, an old friend of Saddam from his days as head of the Russian foreign intelligence service. It was he who went to Baghdad to resolve an impasse over weapons inspections last November, coming up with a formula that gave Moscow a foreign policy coup.

Although the SVR is independent of the Foreign Ministry, Mr Primakov's appointment created a powerful link between the two. If Moscow had intelligence about planned Unscorm random checks, it could tip off the Iraqis if it thought it would produce dividends for Russia — and the Primakov visit last November could be an example of *quid pro quo* dealing.

But despite the Iraqi harassment and the apparent efforts of Russian spies, Unscorm has destroyed huge quantities of Iraqi weapons, including more than 150 Scud missiles and about 28,000 chemical munitions. □ The Prime Minister yesterday won the Cabinet's backing for military action against Iraq if required to secure Unscorm free access to suspected sites. He is expected to seek parliamentary approval during a full-day debate next Tuesday.

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Libyan play, page 18
German war claims, page 19
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Ruud Gullit: The Dutch manager's dismissal ends weeks of unrest at Chelsea as well as mutterings about a dressing room rebellion

Gullit sacked amid rumblings of mutiny

By ADRIAN LEE

RUUD GULLIT, the flamboyant Dutchman who put the flair back into Chelsea, was sacked by the London football club yesterday over his demands for a new multi-million-pound contract.

The only Premiership manager to have his own brand of clothes, he will be replaced by the equally stylish Italian, Gianluca Vialli, the team's top scorer. The dismissal ends weeks of unrest at the club and mutterings about a dressing room mutiny. The club is laden with foreign players and Gullit, said to earn £35,000 a week, was unable to keep all his squad happy. Vialli included. Recently players, upset at the club's run of poor form, held a meeting from which the manager was excluded.

Gullit, who followed the England coach Glenn Hoddle into the Stamford Bridge manager's seat, was credited with

reviving the club which was the glamour team of the 1970s but had fallen on hard times. The team won the FA Cup last year, is now second in the Premiership and could still reach two cup finals.

The Dutchman is a playboy who has been enjoying London life and, just over 2 years ago, signed a £200,000



Vialli: attracted to club by Gullit's status

deal to produce a line of "urban street" clothes called Ruud Wear. He also had a multi-million-pound boot deal, is currently endorsing pizza in television commercials and made numerous appearances as a football pundit.

Yesterday, as more than 200 journalists drank coffee with Chelsea sugar, Ken Bates, the club chairman, said money was solely to blame: "I am sorry to say it has come to this, but football economics are not yet that crazy."

Talks about a new contract had dragged on for months, the club said. Chelsea was not prepared to meet the demands of Gullit, still an occasional player, and he stormed out at lunchtime. Chelsea said it had been prepared to make Gullit the Premiership's best paid manager. When he stalled, it was decided he had to go.

Vialli, wearing an immaculate dark suit with white

breast pocket handkerchief, said in true football-manager dead-but-style, that he was "delighted amazed... it came out of the blue."

Last night a poster of the former manager still hung in the club shop. The Chelsea Megastore, and his range of clothes was on sale. "We haven't been told to stop selling them," an assistant said. "As yet."

Vialli, formerly of Juventus, was one of the stars attracted to Chelsea by Gullit's football status. He promptly found

himself unable to command a regular team place. "Will you play yourself more often than Ruud played you?" he was asked yesterday. Before he could answer, Mr Bates replied: "He couldn't play himself any less, could he?"

David Mellor, a lifelong Chelsea fan, said: "I am very saddened, but I certainly can't challenge what the chairman thinks is in the best interests of the club."

Chelsea mutiny, page 5
Sacking turmoil, page 52

Alert for killer

French police tracking a serial killer thought to have murdered seven women in Paris fear he may be in Britain. A description of the man, known as the "Beast of the Bassille", has been sent to Scotland Yard and French investigators are now in Britain.

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Irvine bows to backbench protests over legal aid cuts

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Government's plans to scrap much of the £670 million civil legal aid scheme has been shelved in favour of more limited reforms which will not hit the poor.

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, is still on course to widen access to justice for middle-income Britain by expanding "no win, no fee" arrangements for all money claims. But his original plans for a major attack on civil legal aid aimed at cutting costs to the taxpayer have had to be toned down in the face of widespread concern from Labour MPs and the legal profession.

A consultation paper to be published shortly will now see legal aid removed only for accident claims, probably from this summer. Proposals to remove civil legal aid for most other claims involving money or damages, which were to come into effect this April, will be put on hold.

Crucially, Lord Irvine has accepted that "high merit" claims for medical negligence, such as those brought over brain-damaged babies, should still qualify for public funds. However, there will be a new test of "deservingness", so that only cases with a high chance of success will be funded.

Lord Irvine's radical re-drafting of the reforms is

expected to meet with the concerns of Labour backbenchers that the original plans would help the middle classes at the expense of the poorest and most vulnerable.

This week Labour backbenchers met Geoff Hoon, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Lord Chancellor's Department, who has been spearheading the reforms in the Commons. Their view afterwards was that the revised plans would meet their criticisms.

The Government plans a swift consultation period up to May, with regulations to be laid in the summer for the "no

Continued on page 2, col 5

Maze governor to leave before report

By MARTIN FLETCHER AND RICHARD FORD

THE Governor of the Maze prison is relinquishing the post just weeks before the publication of what is likely to be a critical report into two recent security fiascos at the jail.

Unionist MPs have been demanding Martin Mogg's resignation after December's murder of a loyalist paramilitary leader by republican inmates and the escape of an IRA double murderer, who dressed in women's clothing during a Christmas party for prisoners' families.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is now seeking suitable applicants for the £53,000-a-year post. The Maze holds roughly 500 hardcore

terrorists who insist on being treated as prisoners of war, run their own wings and decorate them with paramilitary murals. It employs 1,280 guards and staff and has an annual budget of £50 million.

However, the Northern Ireland Prison Service insisted that Mr Mogg was not stepping down under pressure. A spokesman said Mr Mogg, who has been the service's head of operational management for the past five years, had accepted the additional post of governor only on a temporary basis last October when the previous incumbent took early retirement.

Ceasefire pledge, page 2

Beef-on-bone law takes a first bite

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AGRICULTURE
CORRESPONDENT

A SCOTTISH homier has become the first person in Britain to be prosecuted for breaching the Government's beef-on-the-bone ban imposed two months ago because of a remote risk of infection with "mad cow" disease.

The Lodge, Carfraemill, 20 miles south of Edinburgh, said yesterday he had been summoned to appear before Selkirk Sheriff Court on March 10. He faces a possible fine of £5,000 or six months in prison, or both.

The case follows a dinner which Mr Sutherland held at his hotel on December 22 in deliberate defiance of the ban. Some 170 people, mostly local

farmers, sat down to a free meal of prime Aberdeen Angus on the bone and donated £1,700 to the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity. The dinner was interrupted by two health inspectors from the Scottish Borders Council.

"Even though I paid for the meal myself... it appears that the Food Safety Act, under which the ban is enforced, defines 'sale' very

widely to include 'supply'." Mr Sutherland said.

The case will be closely watched in England and Wales where there has been a marked reluctance to enforce the ban.



Sutherland: faces fine

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2 HOME NEWS

Lilley-livered approach thwarts Tory's nearly man

JOKES that depend upon acquaintance with some book, film or television programme are always a risk. Your sketchwriter realises that many readers will be unfamiliar with the Channel 4 American sitcom Frasier. But those who are may share my delight at the discovery of our very own Niles Crane - alive and well and thriving at the dispatch box, alias "Peter Lilley".

quite gets his girl, the lissome Daphne. Others, bolder, keep trumping him. "Despair inhabited his breast," wrote Hilaire Belloc, of such a man: "For, having an agnostic mind. He was exceedingly refined."

hanger and flogger and disdains demagoguery, more brutish men get the girl. To Niles has fallen the task of kicking below the belt at Geoffrey Robinson, the Pymaster General. Lilley peers at the convivial Robinson over his gold-rimmed glasses, asks the right questions, and claws fastidiously at his prey: but Niles is a man, who, having demonstrated what needs to be demonstrated to the satisfaction of persons of equal intellect, would not stoop to the pantomime required to

satisfy inferior minds. Brazen he is not. Because (unlike almost everyone else in the Commons these days) Lilley likes to engage with debate as it unfolds, he is an unsuitable launcher of prefabricated sound-bites. When he tries they rarely work because he looks ashamed. Sometimes he sounds as though he is debating with himself - for want of any other challenge adequate to his intelligence.

part in Seattle, had made one of his periodic resolutions to hit hard and take no prisoners. The Tory spokesman took a remarkably bold swing at the Chief Treasury Secretary, Alistair Darling. Smooth Mr Darling, who has never knowingly answered a question, ducked of course, but must have been mildly surprised when Lilley predicted a recession and rising unemployment if the Chancellor sticks to his fiscal policies. Niles all but banged the dispatch box. Daphne, if she were watching, would have been impressed.

"hefty," he said. One can imagine his young advisers him proposing more reportable adjectives: "Try 'stinking' Mr Lilley." "I don't think that's quite me." "Or 'gob-smacking,' sir?" "Oh no." One by one, suggestions are eliminated: "swinging", "walloping", "devastating", "lobbering", "thumping", "catastrophic" and "mammoth" are all ruled too vulgar. "Hefty, sir?" "Do you think I dare?" "Go on!" And he did. For Niles, it was a brave word. Let us hope Daphne notices.



MATTHEW PARRIS POLITICAL SKETCH

NEWS IN BRIEF

Priest is convicted of assault on girl, 13

A Catholic priest is facing a prison sentence after being convicted of indecently assaulting a 13-year-old girl; nearly 25 years ago. Father John Lloyd, 57, was warned at Cardiff Crown Court that he should expect a jail term because of his calling when he is sentenced next week. The jury failed to find Lloyd guilty of 20 other charges of sexual assault against children up to 25 years ago. He was cleared of four rapes and seven indecent assaults and the jury failed to reach a verdict on another nine charges. The woman whom Lloyd assaulted, now 37, said he molested her at his house in Treforest, Glamorgan, after being asked to baptise her.

Mugging death

George Wigan, 20, grandson of the 13th Baron of Kinnaird of Rossie and heir to a multi-million-pound fortune, has died a week after being mugged while on holiday in Goa, India. The barony of Kinnaird, which he was due to inherit, dates from 1682 and the family can trace its roots in Perthshire to the 12th century.

Run on chips

All runners in the London Marathon will have a tiny microchip stuck to their shoes to beam names and positions to beacons along the route. The scheme will allow broadcasters to have regular updates and information on the runners. The chips will also record the start and finish time of the 31,000 competitors.

Prescott apology

The record company EMI apologises to John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, over his soaking by a member of Chumbawamba. Executives met Mr Prescott to tell him the incident at the Brit music awards, when Danbert Nobacon threw a bucket of water over him, was "offensive and unacceptable".

Advert curbs

The rules on advertising on television and radio could be extended to posters and the press. The government-appointed Committee on Standards in Public Life is reviewing the marketing of political parties after complaints about advertisements during the general election.

Hearing aid

A totally deaf person can be made to hear by using ultrasound pulses from a transmitter placed on their neck. Japanese researchers claim. A team at an Osaka medical school has developed a device that can send high frequency impulses directly through the bones of the skull to the brain's hearing centre.

Hughes selected

Poet Laureate Ted Hughes has been shortlisted for the £10,000 WH Smith award for Tales from Ovid, with John Burnside, The Dumb House; Peter Carey, Jack Maggs; Ian McEwan, Enduring Love; Charles Nicholl, Somebody Else's Arthur Rimbaud in Africa 1880-91; and Iain Pears, An Instance of the Fingerpost.

Broadway call

A West of Ireland theatre director has been picked to stage a new Arthur Miller play on Broadway. Garry Hynes was asked after Miller saw one of her productions in Galway last summer. Impressed, he went backstage to ask her to direct Mr Peter's Connections which opens in New York in May.

Row over preface delays launch of Church year book

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A ROW over criticisms of aspects of Church of England government as "godless" has delayed publication of the church's own official guide, its 1998 Year Book. Publication of the 485-page book, now into its 114th edition and considered essential reading for all interested in Anglican affairs, has been put back because of consternation over its preface, written by a senior laywoman theologian.

committed suicide after he was identified. According to today's Church Times, the Church of England Year Book 1998 has been delayed because of the preface, written by Dr Christina Baxter, chairman of the General Synod's house of laity and principal of St John's theological college, Nottingham. Her preface, which has gone through several drafts, is understood to be highly critical of church government.

that earlier publication would distract attention from this week's synod. Synod members expected to be handed the Year Book during the two-day meeting this week. But it will now be posted out next week. Dr Baxter wrote her preface, which is meant to be a round-up of church events in 1997, last autumn. She is understood to be most severely critical about the way bishops are appointed in the church. The Church Times says that Dr Baxter's preface will be considered an "own goal" because it appears in an official publication, and speculates that consternation in the church is so great that the preface might be discontinued next year. A church spokesman admitted there had been a delay and some re-drafting. "But everything gets re-drafted," he said.

Teachers back call to scrap schools worship

CHURCHES and teachers are calling for the daily act of worship in schools to be scrapped, a report published today says. Published by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, it notes "widespread antipathy" to the statutory requirement to have a daily act of collective worship of a broadly Christian nature and urges a review of the law.

It was backed last night by the Methodist Church, which said schools should instead be allowed to put on regular assemblies of "a spiritual and moral character". The Church of England returned a "blank" response during consultation, the report says.

Dr Baxter said she would not comment until Monday, the book's launch. She was writing during controversy over the appointment of the Right Rev Martin Wharton to Newcastle. The appointment of Bishop Wharton, who is due to be enthroned tomorrow, has alienated three evangelical parishes in the diocese because of his reported views on homosexuality.



Lord and Lady Granville at the Lords yesterday. He thought he was only 99

Peers hold a surprise party for oldest lord

BY JAMES LANDALE

BRITAIN'S oldest peer, who fought at Gallipoli and was once an aide to Ramsay MacDonald, yesterday celebrated his 100th birthday with a rare visit to the House of Lords. Lord Granville of Eye's visit was hailed by warm tributes from party leaders, but came as a surprise to most peers, who thought the crossbencher was still aged only 99. Most believed that Lord Denning, the former Master of the Rolls who was 99 last month, was the eldest peer.

And so did Lord Granville until Buckingham Palace rang up to ask if he was eligible for a telegram from the Queen. Lady Granville phoned the registrar's office at Reading where her husband was born and discovered that he had been mistaken about his age for most of his life. According to Who's Who and DoD's Parliamentary Compendium, the peer was born in 1898. In fact, he was born on February 12 1898. Lord Granville, a Liberal MP from 1929 to 1951, was made a life peer in 1967. He celebrated his birthday in the tea room with Lady Granville, his daughter, and son-in-law, Emmanuel Goussakakis in the chamber, he listened to tributes from his wheelchair.

Irvine

Continued from page 1 win" arrangements and a modernisation of Justice Bill this autumn for other reforms needing legislation.

The Lord Chancellor's paper will have four key proposals. First there will be an expansion of "no win, no fee" arrangements to all disputes. Secondly, legal aid will be removed from personal injury accident claims, but it will be retained for medical negligence, public interest cases such as judicial review cases (challenges to public authorities), housing cases such as disputes between landlord and tenant and social welfare cases.

If "no win, no fee" work takes off for claims other than personal injuries, then the Government will look again at withdrawal of legal aid. But no timescale has been set. A third proposal is for a new stiffer test for people seeking legal aid, although Lord Irvine may not insist on the 75 per cent threshold originally mentioned.

Fourth, a "public interest" fund will finance test cases and other actions which may affect a number of people. For the first time, this will include some test claims before industrial tribunals where until now legal aid has never been available.

Sinn Fein faces talks expulsion

BY MARTIN FLETCHER, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

GERRY ADAMS said yesterday that the IRA ceasefire was intact as he strove to prevent Sinn Fein's removal from the peace talks. "There are no grounds for expulsion and the peace process cannot work without us," the Sinn Fein leader said.

He accused the Ulster Unionists of trying to have his party ejected. Unionists were motivated not by a desire to protect the Mitchell principles of democracy and non-violence but "their own tactical objective of preventing meaningful change in the status quo", he said.

The Government said that the Ulster Democratic Party, banned from the talks last month after its paramilitary associates killed three Catholics, may be readmitted by the end of the month. Before the talks move to Dublin on Monday, Ronnie Flanagan, Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, will brief Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, on whether it was the IRA that murdered two Belfast men this week. Mr Adams denied that Sinn Fein

represented the IRA and said that his party was committed to peaceful methods. Sinn Fein's future is expected to dominate Monday's talks. The British and Irish governments would risk a return to widespread IRA violence by expelling the party but yesterday's ruling on the UDP makes suspension a possibility. Four men were convicted in Dublin yesterday of having "one of the biggest bomb factories ever found" in the Irish Republic.

Bryan McNally, 56, of Foxrock, Co Dublin; John Conroy, 37, of Dublin; Gabriel Cleary, 54, of Tallaght, Co Dublin; and Michael Cully, 48, of Clonsilla, Co Louth, will be sentenced today with Thomas Conroy, 76, the owner of the farm in Ballyfarrell, Clonsilla, who has already pleaded guilty to possessing explosive substances there on June 20, 1996. Thousands of people in schools and workplaces throughout Ireland observed a two-minute silence yesterday morning in support of the peace process.

A roundabout choice for spies

NEITHER le Carré nor Deighton ever quite got round to setting a spy novel in Basingstoke. But then, truth is always stranger than fiction. Plain, honest dullness does not normally make good background for high drama: you need a touch of the menacing seediness which Basingstoke patently lacks. A recently published guide to Hampshire states baldly: "One would hesitate to recommend a visit to Basingstoke, for there is nothing attractive about the town, and very little of historical interest remains."

It may, of course, have been its very anonymity that made it the perfect location for a bit of international skullduggery. Who would dream of looking for spies in

Western Europe, its population rising from 17,000 in 1951 to 67,000 in 1981, thanks partly to its designation as a London overspill site. But what attracted all those extra bonhomers could be have been its tiny road with endless roundabouts, which has attracted to the town the nickname of Doughtnut City? Or could it be the traffic-free shopping centre, which causes the above-mentioned guidebook to veer close to enthusiasm in describing it as "one of the best in Hampshire"? Or could it be the high

romance of those organisations headquartered in the town, the AA and the Civil Service recruitment agency? Local residents report a vibrant nightlife: after dark, the town is lit up by the neon of the new Basingstoke, they say, descends on the Chicago Rib Shack restaurant, Yates's Wine Lodge, and Hee's somewhat pricey Chinese restaurant. It is unlikely that many customers will have been led in by their private jets to the conveniently situated Blackbushe airfield. The Duke of Wellington was given the nearby mansion at Stratfield Saye by a grateful nation and while spy writers may have so far ignored it, but it does have one literary association: Jane Austen was born just up the road, in the village, of Steventon.

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Alan Hamilton examines the few credentials offered by Basingstoke as a venue for international intrigue. In recent decades Basingstoke has claimed to be the fastest-growing town



هكذا من الاعمال

Playboy prince 'threw palace sex parties'

Michael Horsnell on the salacious lifestyle of the Sultan of Brunei's brother



One of the ten erotic pens costing £800,000

PRINCE Jefri of Brunei indulged himself with the purchase of a sumptuous home in Park Lane for an inflated price of £21 million simply to keep his prostitutes hidden, the High Court was told yesterday.

The playboy Prince would fly up to 50 prostitutes at a time from various parts of the world and put them up at his palaces in Brunei for sex parties with his friends, it was alleged.

Prince Jefri, 44, the youngest brother of the Sultan, the world's richest man, also spent millions on *objets d'art*, including a 3ft x 2½ft bedside rug made from solid gold threads and precious stones for which he paid about \$8 million (£5 million).

His erotic tastes were similarly catered for with a £5 million set of ten gold watches designed with mechanically copulating couples. There was also £895,000 blackjack table for private games with his friends.

The extravagant lifestyle of the Prince, who plays polo with the Prince of Wales, was outlined on the fourth day of a hearing in which Prince Jefri, who has four wives, is being sued for £80 million by his former friends and emissaries, Bob and Rafi Manoukian. They claim that he failed to honour two property deals.

The Prince, who recently bought Asprey, the Queen's jewellers, for £244 million, is counter-suing for £100 million, claiming that the brothers exploited his friendship and made unreasonable profits from property, the supply of *objets d'art* and other services, which they concealed from him.

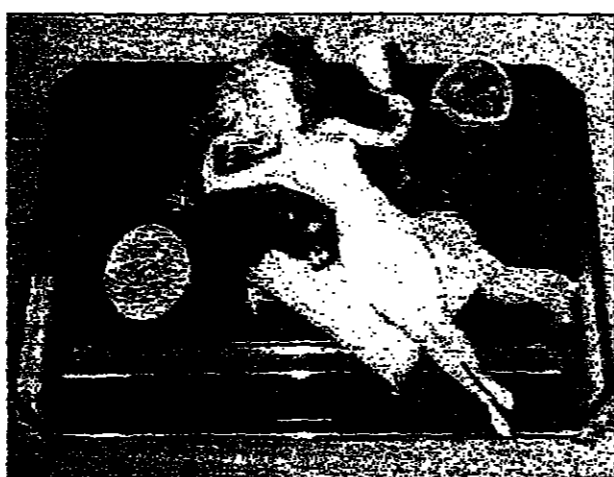
The case, expected to last six months, will be closely followed in America where the Prince is being sued by Shannon Marketic, a former Miss USA, who claims that she was held captive for use by his friends as a "sex slave".

Christopher Carr, QC, for the Manoukian brothers, told Mr Justice Longmore: "If I might be allowed a little understatement, Prince Jefri is a very rich man, but the scale of his wealth is matched by his appetite for extravagance and self-indulgence."

He said that the Prince, who owned a "string" of palaces and 600 cars, had spent "unimaginable" sums, including £21 million on the former Playboy club in Park Lane in November 1989 despite being told by reputable, professional valuers two months earlier



Bob and Rafi Manoukian at the High Court yesterday



A gold and diamond statue of Venus worth £174,000

that it was only worth about £5 million.

He did that "even before his wealth had attained the heights to which is subsequently rose" so he could keep his prostitutes "away from the public eye".

Mr Carr added: "Prince Jefri's main interest in life involves massive self-indulgence and spending unimaginable sums of money."

Outlining the Prince's lifestyle, he said: "A substantial proportion of his extensive palatial construction in Brunei was carried out for the purpose of providing his nightly entertainment, his sex parties, attended by up to 50 prostitutes from various countries, flown into Brunei and paid, housed, clothed and bejewelled at his expense."

Turning to his interest in property, he said the Prince appeared to have been "buying up single-handedly a significant proportion of the luxury property coming onto the London market. This vast quantity of property, residential property, has then to be furnished and fitted out with paintings and *objets d'art*. Prince Jefri's taste for such items appears to be unlimited."

Between 1984 and 1995 the London-based Manoukian brothers concluded at least £500 million worth of deals on behalf of the Prince, including the supply of *objets d'art* which they commissioned and offered to him either for purchase or rejection. These included several hundred watches, the vast majority of which were required as "gifts for his girls".

Mr Carr said that the Prince claimed to have been "shattered" when he discovered in late 1996 that the Manoukians "had sold goods to him at what he now claims to be an excessive profit". He told the judge: "We propose to suggest to Your Lordship that this is one of the most audacious and dishonest claims ever to have come before the court. The claim is a lie."

"The reason it has been brought is that Prince Jefri is so affronted and offended at being sued by the Manoukians for the money that he owes them that he has given instructions that their lives should be made a misery by suing them for everything that moves and engaging them in vastly expensive and time-consuming litigation."

Mr Carr said that it was "ludicrous" to suggest that Rafi Manoukian, a businessman, would have devoted 11 years to Prince Jefri for no reward. The brothers, who were born in Armenia to a Christian family and travel on Lebanese passports, took normal business risks when submitting objects for his perusal, Mr Carr said. Profits were properly made with a 100 per

cent mark up by the Manoukians.

Such items include two nude statues of Venus in 18-carat gold and diamonds that they commissioned from the Spanish makers Carrera & Carrera for \$87,000 each. The Prince rejected them because he already had some, and the brothers, who paid for them, still possess them.

During the hearing the judge was shown photographs of several sumptuous and specially designed items which Rafi Manoukian had offered for sale to Prince Jefri. In addition to the gold thread carpet made by Cristofol of Paris, were:

□ A four-panel screen of gold and jewels, also made by Cristofol, sold to the Prince for \$12 million in 1986.

□ The wooden blackjack table designed with precious stones and a gold shoebox for the cards. Mr Carr said: "Prince Jefri now claims that he did not even know this table had been delivered, that it had never been taken out of its packing. That is a lie. Its purpose is to protect Prince Jefri's appearance of religious devotion from any improper taint within a society of increasingly fundamentalist attitude."

□ A £2.6 million gold and jewel encrusted ceremonial sword ordered by the Prince for his son Prince Hakom.

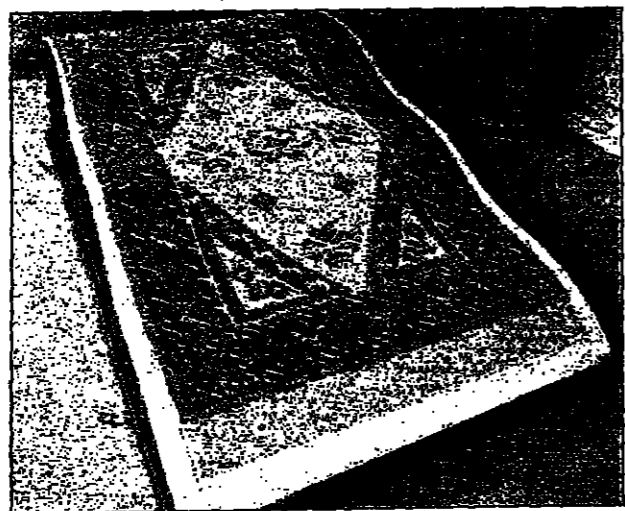
□ A £2.7 million gold and diamond-encrusted picture frame made to look like bamboo by Cristofol — an idea of Rafi Manoukian with which the Prince was delighted.

□ A set of 10 erotic pens made by Gerald Genta of Geneva, in which the top appears to copulate with the bottom, commissioned by Rafi and sold for £80,000 to the Prince who had knocked down the asking price of £1 million.

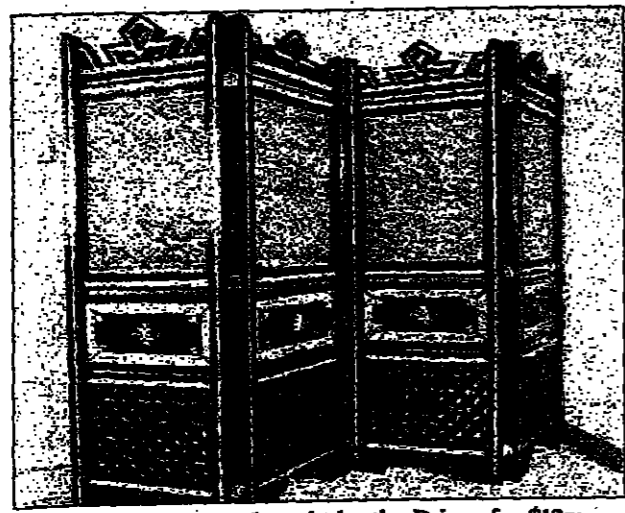
The case continues on Monday when the judge will inspect the Prince's former home in Park Lane.



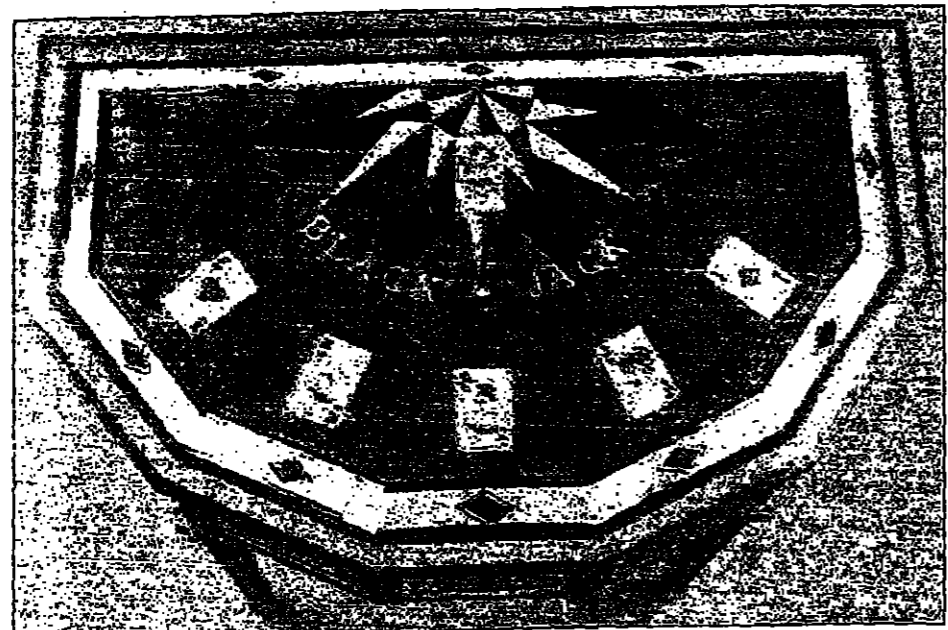
Prince Jefri, 44, is being sued for £80m, and is counter-suing for about £100m



The \$8m carpet made of jewels and gold threads



A jewelled screen bought by the Prince for \$12m



The blackjack table inlaid with diamonds bought by the Prince for £895,000

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- PAMELA
- HARRY
- ELISABETH
- MAUREEN
- UNCLETOM
- BUNTY
- MIRANDA
- DAVID
- CHRIS
- DEE
- NICKY
- GRAN
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- CHARLIE
- MIKE
- UNCLE JOHN
- ELLA
- HELEN
- DAVID H
- ANDY
- LIZ
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GIORGIO ARMANI
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Primary schools get £22m to cut class sizes to 30

By JOHN O'LEARY AND JILL SHERMAN

MORE than 120,000 children will be taught in smaller classes from September in the first phase of the Government's scheme, launched yesterday, to set a limit of 30 pupils for the first three years of school.

David Blunkett, the Education and Employment Secretary, announced that 25 local authorities would share £22 million saved from the phasing-out of the Assisted Places Scheme in independent schools. The money will be used to employ thousands of teachers in the most crowded state primary schools.

The Government has promised that by 2001, no five, six or seven-year-old will be taught in a class of more than 30 children. As the number of assisted places dwindles, the amount available for the project will rise to more than £100 million.

Mr Blunkett said he was

delighted to make an early start on one of the Government's "key pledges". About a quarter of the 501,000 infants taught in classes of more than 30 would benefit. Tony Blair, visiting Rosetta primary school in East London, said the money was an essential step. "Education is personally my domestic priority. My vision is that Britain will have the best educated workforce in the world."

Teachers' leaders welcomed the initiative but parents' groups questioned whether the programme would be effective without the addition of much larger sums to extend popular schools. Ministers have promised money from the £250 million "new deal" for school building announced in last year's Budget but the initial £22 million is purely for teachers' salaries.

Critics have said more children may be denied their par-

ents' choice of school as class size limits are applied. But Mr Blunkett said in a BBC radio interview: "Far from actually precluding the preference of parents, I think this will help them."

William Hague yesterday admitted that the Tories had made a mistake in opposing Labour's policy on smaller class sizes and suggesting there was no link between the number of pupils and educational standards. Under John Major's Government the Tories vigorously opposed Labour's plans to cut primary class sizes to 30 or less.

Mr Hague's change of mind follows a series of focus groups which showed that the public's main concern about schools was big class sizes.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said that pupils and parents in the areas benefiting would be delighted. But he pointed out that more than 300,000 children aged between 5 and 7 and a million older pupils still faced oversized classes.

Peter Smith, general secretary of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, said today's announcement was only the beginning of a "long haul". It would not be easy to find the necessary teachers.

Judith Wood, who chairs the National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations, said there were still serious concerns about whether schools would be able to pay for extra teachers.



Class act: children at Deer Park school, among the top 40 primaries, but which now has class sizes of up to 38

No room at top for more pupils

By JOHN O'LEARY

A SCHOOL that was named among the top 40 primaries in England last month is hoping for a share of the £22 million fund to cut class sizes. But Deer Park primary, near Chesterfield, may have to turn the money away unless it also receives funding for a new classroom.

Classes of 30 have been a pipe dream for Deer Park since it headed Derbyshire's primary school league table last year. With some classes of 38, children are being turned away unless they meet strict admission criteria.

Peter Clark, the head teacher, said: "Since the league tables came out, parents have been clamouring to get their children in here. Unless we had an

extra room or two, there is no way we could run classes of 30. The only space we have is in the hall, which we need to offer a balanced curriculum."

Deer Park has been waiting for three years to replace two temporary classrooms with roofs supported by pit props and is hoping for a third to make use of the extra teacher that the government initiative would provide. But Dave Wilcox, who chairs the county's education committee, was adamant yesterday that no capital funding was available to reduce class sizes and teachers would be allocated elsewhere if schools could not accommodate them.

Derbyshire won yesterday's biggest allocation, at £1.16 million, in recognition of the county's 9,100 five to seven-

year-olds in classes of more than 30. All 100 schools in the authority's bid for funding should get at least one more teacher.

With an average class size of 34.5, Deer Park is in a better position than many Derbyshire schools. St John's Church of England Primary School, in Belper, for example, has 44 children in its reception class, so many over the limit that it will qualify for two extra teachers.

Peter Blunsdon, the head teacher, said: "In five years, our numbers have gone up from 260 to 380 and we have had only one extra teacher. If there was a limit of 30 pupils now up to the age of 7, I would have to have 47 children in the older classes and the classrooms just wouldn't take them."

Autistic boy must leave US education

By DAVID CHARTER

AN AUTISTIC boy will have to return from a special school in America after the Court of Appeal yesterday rejected his mother's claim for public funding.

Julie Richardson first sent her son, Ben, 5, to the £55,000-a-year Higashi School in Boston at her own expense because Solihull council said that suitable schooling could be provided in England.

Mrs Richardson appealed after a Special Needs Tribunal supported the council's refusal to pay the fees. Parents believe the school achieves rapid progress, but some councils believe its methods are too "physical".

The council paid for Ben to attend the Boston school during the legal process after his mother's money ran out in the summer. Mrs Richardson, from Chiswick Green, Solihull, was refused leave to appeal to the House of Lords.

The Court of Appeal postponed a further decision on autistic brothers David and Simon White, 7, who have been taught at home in Greenford, West London, for 18 months while their mother tries to secure Higashi places. Angela White appealed after a Special Needs Tribunal upheld Ealing council's decision that the boys could be taught in England. The case was adjourned for legal argument.



White: wants to send her two sons to US

A TICKING-OFF FOR PUT-DOWNS

Teachers were yesterday told by their union to stop making sarcastic remarks to humiliate troublemakers in the classroom. De-meaning pupils only builds up further resentment, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers says in a guide being sent to its 150,000 members.

It urges teachers to reinforce classroom rules rather than using phrases such as "Have you retired?". Of

the 11 typical ways teachers told off children, only two are considered appropriate: "Rulers aren't for fighting with" and "I won't bother to read if you go on like this."

Unwise phrases include giving naughty children labels ("Stop behaving like a baby"); warnings and threats ("I'm going to get annoyed") and simple attention-drawing statements ("Sandra" or "SC1").

Decline in mature students blamed on tuition fees

By DAVID CHARTER

A SHARP fall in the numbers of mature students applying for university was yesterday blamed on the introduction of £1,000 tuition fees this autumn.

Official figures published yesterday showed an overall drop in applications of 4.2 per cent, but within that was an 18.3 per cent fall

in the number of over-25s seeking a place this autumn.

Tony Higgins, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service, said that the figures showed that older people were unwilling to take on extra debts to study. A spokeswoman for Baroness Blackstone, the Higher Education Minister, said she welcomed the figures because there

had been only a 1.9 per cent drop in applications from school-leavers.

From this September, new university students will pay £1,000 course fees annually on a means-tested basis and the maintenance grant for those from low-income families will be scrapped. About one third are expected not to have to contribute towards fees.

The Ucas figures yesterday

showed large falls in applications for some subjects, including teacher training (down 15.4 per cent), sociology (down 11.6 per cent) and English (down 6.8 per cent). Subjects with increases include sports science (up 6.2 per cent), design studies (up 9.8 per cent) and marketing (up 17.6 per cent).

Applications for degree courses were down 3.7 per cent, and the sub-

degree Higher National Diploma courses at universities and higher education colleges were down 14 per cent.

A rush of late applications led Ucas to revise downwards last year's provisional estimate of a 6 per cent overall drop. A total of 332,455 applications were received before the deadline of December 15. Late-comers will still be accepted but

universities will consider them after all those who beat the deadline.

The total is 14,578 down on the previous year, but Ucas points out that 1996 actually saw 26,000 more students admitted than expected, many of them going to college a year early to beat the fees. Overall, as ministers have pointed out, there has therefore been a net increase in applications.

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Champion fights a knockout decision

The woman who wants to be the nation's first professional female boxer is accusing the authorities of delivering an unfair blow. Lin Jenkins reports

BOXING officials believe that women are unfit to fight because pre-menstrual tension makes them unstable and more accident-prone, a tribunal was told yesterday.

Jane Couch, the world female welterweight champion boxer, is challenging the refusal of the sport's governing body to grant her a licence to be the country's first professional female boxer.

Dinah Rose, her counsel, told the industrial tribunal that Miss Couch had been "shut out from boxing in this country" purely because of her sex when the British Boxing Board of Control rejected her application last summer after 20 minutes' deliberation.

All seven reasons given for the refusal were medical ones. One reason cited by the board, she said, was that women suffered pre-menstrual which made them "prone to accident, emotion-

ally more labile and therefore more prone to injury". "I had to look up that word [labile], and it means unstable," Ms Rose said.

"I struggled to find a more audacious, more outrageous plea in any sex discrimination case in the past ten years. The true nature of their objection is the crudest gender stereotyping... it's about the distaste felt by many in this last bastion of male-only sport."

She said that the argument belonged to the same "distinguished history" that had suggested women's wombs would fall out if they competed in marathon running.

Women competed in rugby, ice hockey, karate and equestrian sports, which were far more dangerous than boxing. "There is no credible medical reason or other reason why a woman should not be a professional boxer," Ms Rose said.

Adrian Whiteson, medical adviser to the board, drew up the medical objections to Miss Couch's licence application. Bernard Buckley, for the British Boxing Board of Control, said: "I wish to refute from the outset that the board are dinosaurs seeking to exercise male tyranny and protect their own sex."

The board defended its medical objections. It said hormonal changes could lead to weight gain of up to 5lb, making it difficult to keep to weight categories. Painkillers needed to combat painful periods would be banned under the rules, as would be oral contraceptives. Damage to breasts could



Jane Couch arriving at the tribunal yesterday. She alleges sex discrimination



Whiteson: doctor who drew up objections

produce fatty lumps which could be mistaken for cancer.

Leonard Read, president and chairman of the board, admitted that when women boxed on the same bill as Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield the spectators had emptied the bars to watch them. But Mr Read said that such bouts "only attracted alleged fans who want to see women fighting each other

much as they did women mud wrestling".

The board did not question Miss Couch or have her medically examined. "I don't suffer from PMT, so my performance is not affected. I don't suffer from painful periods. I have a pregnancy test before each fight and I am not on the contraceptive pill," Miss Couch, known as the Fleetwood Assassin, said.

She began her career in kick-boxing contests, receiving £200 a bout. She won the Women's International Boxing Federation welterweight title in Denmark in 1996 and has successfully defended the title twice. Promoters have offered her up to £50,000.

Miss Couch has accused the board of sex discrimination. The tribunal, in Croydon, south London, continues.

Cancer risk lies in children's diet

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

CHILDREN who eat too much run an extra risk of dying from cancer as adults, according to research based on a prewar survey of family diets.

The study found that an intake of 239 calories a day above what a child needs will increase the risk of dying from non-smoking related cancer by 20 per cent. Stephen Frankel, from the Department of Social Medicine at the University of Bristol, says in the *British Medical Journal* today that if the findings are backed by other studies, the implications for public health in Britain will be profound.

His survey used the records of family diets compiled by Lord Boyd Orr between 1937 and 1939. That had involved logging the daily food intake of 1,352 families in to urban and rural centres in England and Scotland chosen to give a cross-section of social classes and occupations.

The dietary survey team weighed and recorded the food available for each family in a week. All meals eaten were logged and even the weight and composition of the household rubbish was noted. A record was kept of which family members were present for each meal and who ate what away from the home.

The information was analysed to produce figures of energy consumption by each family member. This research was eventually used as the basis for working out the amount of food required during wartime rationing.

Dr Frankel managed to track down the health records of 3,834 people - 1,895 men and 1,939 women - from the original families. They were

MODERN KILLER

Cancer has replaced heart disease as the main killer illness in Britain. Deaths from both illnesses are falling but those from cancer more slowly, mainly because so many people smoke. Better diet and awareness of the need for exercise are helping to reduce heart disease more quickly. According to figures issued by the Cancer Research Campaign yesterday, 156,890 people in the UK died from cancer in 1996 compared with 148,186 from heart disease. Four years earlier 163,981 people died from heart disease and 158,803 from cancer.

Cancer bill, page 11

all 16 and under at the time of the original survey. By cross-checking their records, he was able to find out what sort of diet they had as a child and what had happened since.

He found that 103 of the men and 100 of the women had died of cancer. After discounting the 64 men and 34 women among them who had contracted it by smoking, he analysed the diets of the rest. Those who ate too well as a child were more likely to have died of cancer.

Ideally a boy aged between 4 and 6 should have 1,715 calories a day and a girl 1,545. Between 7 and 14 a boy needed 1,970 calories and a girl 1,740. For 15 to 18 year olds the optimal amount was 2,755 for boys and 2,110 for girls.

Women who survive cancer in childhood face a 20 times greater chance of developing breast cancer compared with others of the same age and race, researchers have discovered. The findings mean that survivors should start regular self-examinations at puberty and have semi-annual clinical examinations thereafter, according to a report published today in the specialist journal *Cancer*. The study was based on American figures from the largest long-term patient survey of this type of potential for secondary cancer.

Recovered memories denounced as fiction

By Ian Murray

RECOVERED memories of sexual abuse are pure fantasy, inspired by 19th-century romantic novelists and Hollywood, according to a leading psychiatrist.

Adults who claim to have repressed their memories of traumatic events in their childhood are just making it up, Harrison Pope Jr, Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, writes in the *British Medical Journal* published today.

The central issue, he says, is whether someone can endure

a seemingly unforgettable experience such as repeated rape and then expel the memory from consciousness for years.

Dr Pope notes that there are no cases of such "repression" in literature before the 19th century, when they appear in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, Charles Dickens and the poems of Emily Dickinson. Decades later Freud and Janet "discovered" the concept.

"On critical examination, scientific evidence for repression crumbles," he says. "In

most retrospective studies corroboration of the traumatic event was either absent or fell below reasonable scientific standards.

"Repression may be the stuff of Victorian novels and Hollywood movies, the darling of television dramas... But popular belief does not spare investigators the burden of providing a rigorous, methodologically convincing demonstration of its existence."

He advises doctors against trying to unearth memories while no real proof exists.

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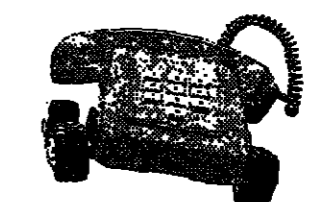
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Switch to digital television sets not likely before 2010

VIEWERS are unlikely to have to buy new digital television equipment before 2010, it emerged yesterday.

Chris Smith, the Media Secretary, yesterday rejected a "impractical" the setting of a five-year deadline for the switch from existing analogue to digital broadcasts. The five-year deadline was one of the options reviewed and discarded by independent communication consultants NERA, but it said a shutdown of analogue television transmission would be feasible "in a 10 to 15-year timeframe".

Mr Smith said it was his intention to set a deadline for the transition to digital but that it was impossible to say what the date would be. He wanted to consult the public and the broadcasting industry, then to evaluate the take-up of new digital services due to launch later this year.

The likelihood is that the Government will decide in two to three years to set a 10-year deadline for the switch-off of analogue so that viewers will not have to buy digital sets for up to 13 years. With most people buying new sets every seven to eight years, Mr Smith hopes that the problem will have evaporated by then.

To begin with viewers will be able to use their existing sets for digital terrestrial television using a "blackbox"

The Government has rejected a five-year deadline for ending analogue broadcasts so that viewers have time to make the change over, writes Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

decoder. But the aim is to integrate the technology into the television set so that consumers will simply buy a digital television set.

British Sky Broadcasting, the satellite venture in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a 40 per cent stake, plans to launch 150 channels of digital television by the end of June. Up to 30 channels of digital terrestrial television, which can be received without a satellite dish, are due to be launched in the last quarter of this year.

Mr Smith gave a pledge yesterday that existing television channels would not be switched off until almost the entire population was able to receive digital television. "There will be no switch-off of analogue until digital receivers are as universal as analogue sets are now," he said. More than 94 per cent of all homes in the country have a television set.

But British Digital Broadcasting, the main commercial digital terrestrial operator, and television set manufacturers are keen to have a final

switch-off date to stimulate the market and bring down the cost of digital television sets. The Government would also like to be in a position to auction off the existing airwaves for mobile communications but has to tread warily to avoid upsetting viewers.

NERA suggested that providing digital services to the last 5 to 10 per cent of the population, some of whom will be unable to receive digital terrestrial television, could be subsidised by the auction of frequencies for other uses. NERA estimated that a five-year deadline for analogue would have meant additional costs of £2.6 billion in buying digital television sets. With a 10-year deadline, that would be less than £600 million.

Britain is ahead of most other countries in introducing digital terrestrial television. America has set 2006 as the date for ending analogue broadcasts but so many conditions have been imposed that it is unlikely to be met.

Media, pages 40-42



Kathleen Atkinson after being cleared yesterday of trying to kill patients

Accused nurse wants her job back

A NURSE who spent three months in jail accused of involvement in the deaths of three patients is taking legal advice to clear her name and get her job back.

The case against Kathleen Atkinson, a former sister in charge of an intensive care unit, was formally dropped by magistrates in Newcastle upon Tyne yesterday.

Fifteen months after Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary dismissed her for gross misconduct, she was arrested and questioned for four days, spending the nights in a police cell. Last May she was charged with two counts of attempted murder and one of incitement to murder.

She was taken to Durham Prison, strip-searched, and treated as a category A prisoner. Although still on remand, she was double-handcuffed after three days and, accompanied by a dog handler, moved into the prison's E1 wing - home to some of the country's most infamous women "lifers". There she rubbed shoulders with the likes of Rose West and Myra Hindley.

Last week, on her 48th birthday, Ms Atkinson was told that the Crown Prosecution Service was discontinuing the case. She said yesterday: "I did nothing wrong and this would have come out in court. Why shouldn't I have my job back, if only to clear my name?"

NEWS IN BRIEF



Alfie Harris

Man wins £225,000 for javelin accident

A man who as a schoolboy suffered brain injuries when he ran into a javelin held by another pupil settled his High Court damages action for £225,000.

Alfie Harris, 23, blamed the accident in 1987 during a PE lesson at Furze Platt School, Maidenhead, for his inability to hold down a job or run his life. Berkshire County Council agreed the sum to compensate for life-long loss of earnings and to pay for a career.

Skydiver dead

The body of a British parachutist who was blown off course during a jump over Thailand on Tuesday was recovered by a trawler 30 miles out to sea. Stephen O'Brien, 38, had been training for a record free-fall jump.

Auction scrapped

An auction of rare German scientific glassware to be held next week has been cancelled by Christie's in London because of doubts about its provenance. The 200 precursor lots had been expected to raise £150,000.

Coach crash fine

The Traveller's coach company was ordered to pay more than £10,000 in fines and costs by magistrates at Sittingbourne, Kent, over a coach crash in which eight tourists and the driver died after the brakes failed.

Dog death case

Four police officers are to appear in court in connection with the death of an alaskan dog during a week-long training course. Essex Police said that the four had been accused of offences under the Protection of Animals Act.

Out by a whisker

Charlie the cat has been banned from Sheringham Library, Norfolk. The ginger tom often snoozed in the library and was fussed over by visitors but was barred after triggering an asthma attack in one borrower.

Lada non-starter

Attempts to form a Lada owners' club have flopped after advertisements failed to attract a single reply. Eddie Wiersma, of Horley, Surrey, its sole member, plans to merge with the USSR car club based in Guildford.

Suspension for solicitor who posed as sister

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER council legal chief was suspended indefinitely as a solicitor yesterday after she masqueraded as her sister during a court case.

Tripart Hayre tried to hoodwink a district judge at Gravesend County Court in Kent although she stood to gain nothing from her deceit. Miss Hayre was caught only when another solicitor, representing a plaintiff at the civil case, recognised her from their university days.

The Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal was told that Miss Hayre, 35, was former head of Rochester until Medway legal services until October 1994 after which her practising certificate expired.

Geoffrey Williams, for the Law Society, said that Miss Hayre's mother had been involved in an "on-off" civil action taken against her by Mandy Terry. The hearing was told, however, that Miss Hayre's mother could not appear at Gravesend County Court on July 10, 1995.

Mr Williams said it was usually the mother's other daughter who dealt with her affairs because the mother could not speak English. That daughter was unavailable so Miss Hayre decided to step

into the breach but the lawyer representing Miss Terry recognised her from university. Miss Hayre tried to cover her face when she noticed her former student colleague, the tribunal was told. When challenged in court, she still maintained she was her sister.

The matter was reported to the district judge who said he would refer the case to the Director of Public Prosecutions as an attempt to pervert the course of justice. The judge said that there had been a deliberate attempt to mislead the court.

Miss Hayre, who now lives in Ontario, explained in a letter why she acted as she did. "She said she decided, unwise, to be her sister because her sister always looked after her mother's affairs since she spoke no English," the hearing was told.

"She said she panicked when she realised she no longer had a practising certificate and she no longer wished to put herself forward as a solicitor."

Miss Hayre, who was not at the hearing, admitted in correspondence conduct unbecoming a solicitor by misleading the court. She was ordered to pay £1,762 in costs.

American Association for the Advancement of Science

Sun may give world a long-range forecast

FROM NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR, IN PHILADELPHIA

THE waxing and waning of the Sun may control temperature changes in the stratosphere, according to a new analysis to be presented to the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Philadelphia.

Scientists have found that solar activity, which follows an 11-year cycle, is matched by the rise and fall of temperatures in the lower stratosphere. They had already found such a relationship in the northern hemisphere and have now found it in the southern hemisphere.

The scientists, Harry van Loon of the US National Centre for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, and Karin Labitzke of the Free University of Berlin, do not argue that solar variations explain global warming. Their observations are limited to the upper atmosphere, which behaves differently to the troposphere, the atmosphere closest to the Earth's surface where warming has been detected.

"The role of the Sun in climate change is still an unsolved problem," Dr van Loon said. "Any relationship between changes in solar output and what happens here on Earth is important for understanding long-term climate."

PROTEINS GIVE HOPE OF PAIN RELIEF

Perennial pain may be controlled by blocking the action of three proteins produced by cells after injury, American scientists have found.

The proteins may explain chronic pain that continues long after the injury has healed. They may also be involved in neuropathic pain, an agonising and untreatable form of pain often seen in people with cancer, diabetes, AIDS or shingles.

Joyce DeLeo, of Dart-

mouth Medical School, will tell the association today that the proteins, called cytokines, are produced by cells in the spinal cord after nerve injury.

Until now the proteins - Interleukin-1, Interleukin-6 and Tumour Necrosis Factor - alpha - had been thought to be a response of the immune system, associated with the central nervous system.

Dr DeLeo said the discovery could lead to new drugs to stop and treat pain.

cent decades has been about one part per thousand between the peak of the activity cycle and the trough. But greater variations may be seen over longer periods. An extended quiet period may have cooled the Earth during the "Little Ice Age" between the mid-1550s and the mid-1800s.

The correlation was stronger in the summer, suggesting it is unlikely to account for the global warming trend which is stronger in the winter.

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Quarry battle could ruin Peak national park

Beauty spot's future in balance, writes Nick Nuttall

THE Peak District National Park risks incurring financial ruin as it fights proposals for a vast quarry which it says breaks planning rules and will devastate a well-known beauty spot.

It knows that if it decides today to block the planned extraction of one million tonnes of limestone a year from Longstone Edge, defeat could leave it with a compensation bill it cannot afford. Members of the park board are expected to say they will use their full powers in objecting to the development near Bakewell, an area increasing-

ly popular with television and film companies.

Peak Practice, the popular doctors' series, is set in nearby Crich and Franco Zeffirelli, the film director, used Hadon Hall, near Bakewell, as Thorrnfield. Mr Rochester's home in Jane Eyre.

The RMC Roadstone company, which recently bought the site, has already said it will appeal to John Prescott, the Environment Secretary. Lawyers for the park believe the inquiry could take six to eight months with no guarantee that it would win.

The issue is being seen as a

test case by all 11 national parks in England and Wales, which face more than 100 similar proposals nationally.

If Mr Prescott rules in favour of RMC, the park would have to compensate it for up to eight months' lost mining. A park spokesman said yesterday: "It could run into hundreds of thousands of pounds. We do not have that kind of money. But if a national park cannot defend the environment, who can?"

The key question at today's meeting is whether the park, after issuing an enforcement order against the proposal, also issues a stop notice barring RMC from carrying out any mining until the outcome of the appeal is known. The park is keen to do so after its last experience with RMC but is nervous about the financial liabilities.

In an earlier appeal by the park against a development at a site called Eldon Hill, RMC carried on quarrying throughout the appeal period and is now processing the minerals. Conservationists, including the Friends of the Earth, have urged the Government to intervene. But ministers at the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions insist that the park, as



Under threat: the outline shows how the quarry at Longstone Edge in the Peak District could expand, covering an area the size of Bakewell



The existing workings, taken over by RMC in 1996

the minerals planning authority, has the powers it needs.

David Bradley, of the Council for the Protection of Rural England and the Friends of the Peak Park, said yesterday: "Yes, they have the powers but they do not have the resources fully to exercise them. We have argued that government should boost resources for test cases or set up some kind of reserve fund." Planning per-

mission was first granted in the 1950s to extract fluorspar at Longstone Edge, which was once rich in the mineral, used for refrigerants, non-stick coatings for pans and welding rods. The minerals were removed by an open-cast method in trenches a few metres wide to a depth of just 15 metres and then backfilled, leaving little damage.

RMC submitted plans to turn the land into a full-scale quarry that could eventually

cover an area the size of Bakewell. The company claims it needs to step up operations to get at the remaining fluorspar deep underground. But critics claim there is little fluorspar left and that the real aim is to remove vast amounts of limestone for road building and construction.

"From a national perspective there are enough supplies

of limestone elsewhere. So a quarry at Longstone is unnecessary," Mr Tippett said.

Ian Southcott of RMC said it was convinced that the existing planning permission allowed it to take limestone in commercial quantities. "The scale of operations will increase but we have a comprehensive landscape and environmental improvements package," Mr Southcott said.

cover an area the size of Bakewell. The company claims it needs to step up operations to get at the remaining fluorspar deep underground. But critics claim there is little fluorspar left and that the real aim is to remove vast amounts of limestone for road building and construction.

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Reluctant witness guilty of contempt

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A WOMAN of 18 was given two months in custody yesterday for refusing to give evidence as a witness in a murder trial.

Sharon White was scheduled to testify for the prosecution at Manchester Crown Court in the trial of Leon Johnson, an alleged gangland figure accused of murdering one of his gang. She was sentenced by Judge Rhys Davies, the Recorder of Manchester, for contempt of court and ignoring a summons to appear as a witness.

White, a student, had spent the night in Risley remand centre after she refused to answer questions at Johnson's trial. The case against him was thrown out when White refused to give evidence. However, he was jailed for five years on a separate charge of drug dealing.

White had made a statement to police which later

went missing. She then made a second statement retracting her earlier evidence. Judge Davies told her: "Your situation was not an enviable one but the action you took and the way you took it are matters which the court cannot overlook."

In court White sniggered and chewed gum as she told the court that she would refuse to answer any questions. "It's done my head in," she said. "I am going to keep my mouth shut. I am going to ignore you."

Stella Massey, White's counsel, said that her attitude amounted to more than bravado and insolence. She said: "There is a real fear of intimidation through the whole of these proceedings and the thought of giving evidence became more and more oppressive. She has been under fear, stress and intimidation."

Boy, 5, died after council staff neglect

BY MARK HENDERSON

A DISABLED five-year-old drowned in a lake because officers who were looking after him neglected his safety, an inquest jury found yesterday.

Martin Hollis, who had problems with movement, speech and sight, died last August while on a day trip to Fairlands Valley Lake, in Stevenage, organised by Hertfordshire Social Services. He went missing after being seen running around the lake without supervision. The inquest in Hitchin was told.

Cheryl Hopkins, assistant director of social services at Hertfordshire County Council, defended the ratio of one member of staff to three children on the trip.

The jury returned a verdict of accidental death, contributed to by neglect on Martin, from Leichworth, Hertfordshire, after nearly three hours' deliberation. Police said no action would be taken.

Town tries gum shield for sticky problem

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

A TOWN stuck with a plague of thoughtless gum chewers has come up with a novel solution - boards where the finished item can be parked without soiling the streets.

Darlington, which faces a £6,000 annual bill for clearing gum off its newly refurbished town-centre paving, is attaching more than 30 boards to lampposts where the gum can be stuck to await disposal. They will bear the messages "Don't Gum Up Darlington", "Chew It, Bin It" and "Park Your Gum Here".

Darlington recently spent £1 million on a facelift, including repaving the market square. The council has, however, had many complaints from locals, visitors and shopkeepers that the gummed streets make the town look grubby.

It is spending £3,000 to put up the gum boards, which are aimed at the 13-23 age group, the biggest chewers in Britain. The "bins" will even have a bull's eye target so youngsters can aim their gum at the boards, which are located at sites such as sports centres and cinemas.

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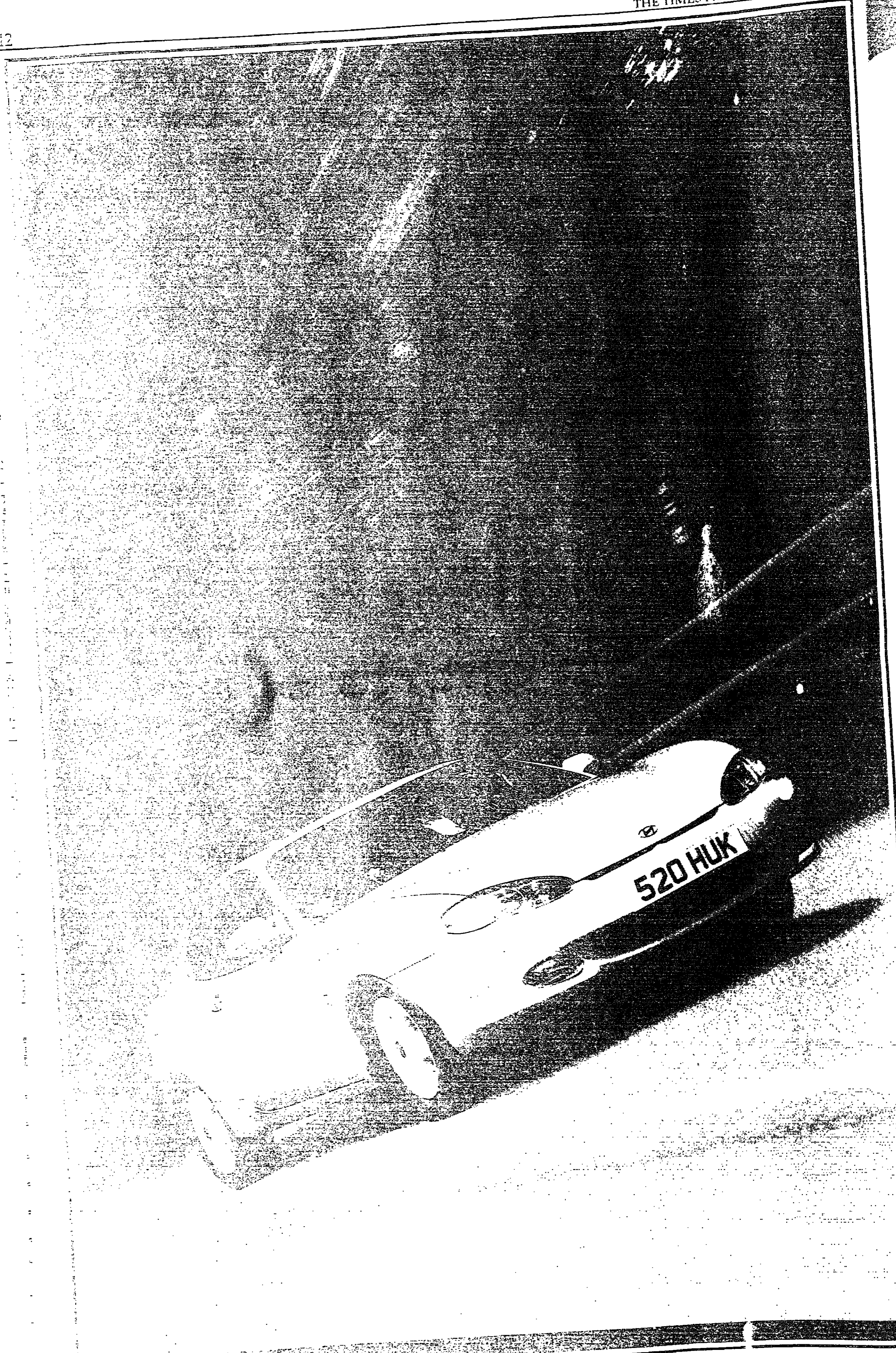
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Tory benefactors put anonymity before generosity

By Polly Newton, Political Reporter

BUSINESSMEN who fear being identified as Tory supporters are sending the party donations of £4,999 — £1 less than the amount that would lead to their names being published under changes promised by William Hague.

The Tories have received a number of cheques for £4,999 since Mr Hague agreed to list more generous donors in the party's annual accounts.

A source at Conservative Central Office said: "These are very wealthy people who might in the past have given £20,000 or £30,000, who think that the hassle caused to them and their businesses if they were identified just isn't worth it."

Some of those most anxious to remain anonymous are said to be bosses of construction firms that depend on contracts with local authorities run by Labour and the Liberal Democrats. "They are terrified of being identified as Conservatives," the source said.

He added that some donors were loath to be named because of a now widespread view that anyone who gave money to a political party must want something in return. "That has tended to frighten away some people

who didn't want anything out of it at all, but wanted to help a cause they believe in without being excoriated for doing so."

Mr Hague's promise of greater openness was made in the face of government plans for a Bill that would force political parties to declare donations of £5,000 or more and prevent them taking money from foreigners.

The Home Office had intended to bring in legislation during this parliamentary session but Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, agreed last month to wait until the Committee on Standards in Public Life has completed its investigation into party funding.

However, Mr Straw made clear that there was no question of ministers changing their minds. He has insisted that the committee is considering how the Government should implement the policy, not whether it should do so.

In a letter to Lord Neill, the committee's chairman, Mr Straw said that the Government was "anxious to move ahead quickly" with legislation. Among the issues being considered by the committee are the problem of defining a "foreign" donation, the possibility of a limit on total

expenditure by parties and the state funding of political parties. There is also the question of preventing wealthy donors from splitting their contributions into several gifts of amounts below the maximum.

Last week, Lord Neill suggested that the proposed £5,000 maximum was "rather high" and said that £1,000 might be more reasonable.

Both Labour and the Tories have faced embarrassment since the election over big donations. Tony Blair was forced onto the defensive after it was disclosed that Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One chief, had given £1 million to Labour at a time when the sport was seeking an exemption from the proposed European ban on tobacco advertising.

Last month, it was revealed that the Tories had accepted £1 million from the Hong Kong businessman Ma Sik-chun, who has evaded the authorities since he was charged in 1978 in connection with one of Asia's largest drug-trafficking operations. It was alleged that the payment was made by Ma's son Ma Ching-kwan in an effort to smooth his father's return to Hong Kong from Taiwan.



Anti-hunt ploy condemned

By James Landale

ANTI-HUNTING MPs were accused yesterday of bringing the House of Commons into disrepute by deliberately delaying a Bill designed to ban the sport.

Tories and Liberal Democrats claimed that filibustering was threatening to kill at least 11 other Private Member's Bills that are being held up by the delay.

Dogs) Bill, and on one occasion even voted against their own amendments in what critics claim is a concerted attempt to waste time.

Tony Blair refused to give the Bill any government time and it is doomed unless supporters can secure extra time by other means. So the anti-hunting MPs have been trying to exploit parliamentary procedures to win more time for the final stages.

Their aim is to delay the Bill in its committee stage, in turn delaying other Private Member's Bills so that when time

is allowed for their report stages only one of them will be ready: the anti-hunt Bill.

David Maclean, Tory MP for Penrith and The Border, has tabled an early day motion condemning the "antics" of the Bill's supporters, including its sponsor, Michael Foster, Labour MP for Worcester, for "bringing the House into disrepute".

Among the measures under threat is the Liberal Democrat John Burnett's Energy Efficiency Bill, which has government support and could become law.

House redesign must consider the neighbours

ANY changes to the House of Lords which ignore the House of Commons are bound to fail. But there are signs that the new Cabinet committee on Lords reform is in danger of making exactly this mistake.

Divisions on the committee have already emerged between ministers from the Lords and from the Commons. The former, Lord Irvine and the committee chairman, and Lords Richard and Carter, the Leader of the Lords and the Chief Whip, view the issue as one primarily for the Lords. Of course, this is a simplification of the subtle reasoning of Lord Irvine and the worldly wise approach of Lord Richard. But, in general, they believe that it is possible to consider the abolition of the voting rights of hereditary peers and changes in the composition of the Lords on their own terms, without much discussion of the implications for the Commons. Implicit in this view is that reform can be taken in gradual stages over the next few years.

By contrast, the Commons members of the committee, including Jack Straw, Ann Taylor and Nick Brown, believe that it is impossible to consider Lords reform in isolation. Any change in the composition of the Lords is bound, on their view, to alter its relationship with the Commons. Removing hereditary peers will increase the authority of the Lords, whatever criticisms are made of a nominated body.

This could mean that the Lords becomes more willing to take a stand and to exercise its existing powers. At present, the main parties in the Lords believe that the House lacks the legitimacy to use these powers. Consequently, the Lords virtually always accepts the will of the Commons, after occasionally going through an elaborate charade of forcing the latter to have a second, generally repetitious, debate on an issue. The Commons spent six hours on Wednesday reversing Lords amendments to the Bill on the referendum for a London mayor. A reformed Lords may not automatically bow to the views of the Commons on anything that matters.

Previous attempts at reform

have foundered because of opposition in the Commons rather than the Lords, as MPs have been wary of a more assertive Lords. As this week's obituary of Enoch Powell have pointed out, his alliance with Michael Foot helped to doom the Crossman plan 30 years ago.

Tony Blair instinctively takes the view of Lords Irvine and Richard. Mr Blair talks about abolishing the voting rights of hereditary peers as if it were just a simple matter of passing a Bill and doing a deal to turn some active current hereditary peers into life peers. Downing Street sees the abolition of the voting rights of hereditary peers as a costless, populist measure. The promise to do so normally wins the loudest cheers at Labour meetings.

But the Commons members of the Cabinet committee are right to believe that abolition of hereditary peers cannot be considered in isolation. The Government is unlikely to be

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

able to sustain its gradualist approach of first, abolition; then a change in the balance of life peers to reflect the proportion of votes cast at the previous election, though with an independent cross-bench element; and then a committee of both Houses to review further changes — and no mention of the Commons. These changes would inevitably affect the powers of the Lords and its role in the wider constitutional changes now under way.

The Constitution Unit argued in a recent report, *Reforming the Lords*, that wider reform should be held over until the next Parliament. But even if legislation is delayed until after the next election, the wider consequences have to be considered now. The Government will not, in practice, be able to introduce its Bill on hereditary peers this winter without at least discussing the longer-term options, and the implications for the Commons.

PETER RIDDELL

MPs press unions' case

A DELEGATION of Labour MPs met Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, yesterday to press their case in the dispute over trade union recognition.

The four MPs were representing an 80-strong group of backbenchers with trade union links. Before the election Labour made a manifesto commitment to legislate for

workforces to be granted union recognition where a majority was in favour. The MPs fear that Tony Blair will bow to employers' demands that this be interpreted as a majority of the whole workforce, not just of those who cast a vote in a ballot.

At yesterday's meeting Mrs Beckett emphasised that a decision had yet to be made.

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Starr 'is trying to break Lewinsky mother'

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE mother of Monica Lewinsky's faced a third day of interrogation yesterday in front of a grand jury after breaking down during her five-hour testimony about her daughter's relationship with President Clinton.

As Marcia Lewis said soaring legal bills could cripple her family, her daughter's lawyer, William Ginsburg, said Monica was guilty only of trying to "protect someone she loved" — Mr Clinton. Mr Ginsburg attacked Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, for planning to "break my client down a piece at a time" and called the lengthy interrogations "abuse".

Ms Lewis, 49, was left so "tormented" on Wednesday, the second day of questioning about her daughter's alleged affair with the President, that a nurse was summoned. She later walked unaided from the courtroom, but appeared red-eyed and anguished.

Ms Lewis's distress yesterday fuelled controversy about the decision of Mr Starr to

force her to reveal whether her daughter had confided in her about the alleged 18-month affair with Mr Clinton. Ms Lewinsky, now 24, shared a flat in the Watergate building with her mother, an author.

Mr Ginsburg attacked the interrogation, saying: "They're putting all kinds of pressure on her, and stress. It's her daughter, for God's sake. It's disgraceful."

As well as concern about incriminating her daughter, Ms Lewis could be at risk if Mr Starr can show that she urged her daughter or her daughter's friend, Linda Tripp, to lie under oath.

The prolonging of Ms Lewis's testimony meant that her daughter, due to appear before the grand jury yesterday, remained in California. Mr Ginsburg, who stayed with his client in Los Angeles, continued to call for her subpoena to be quashed.

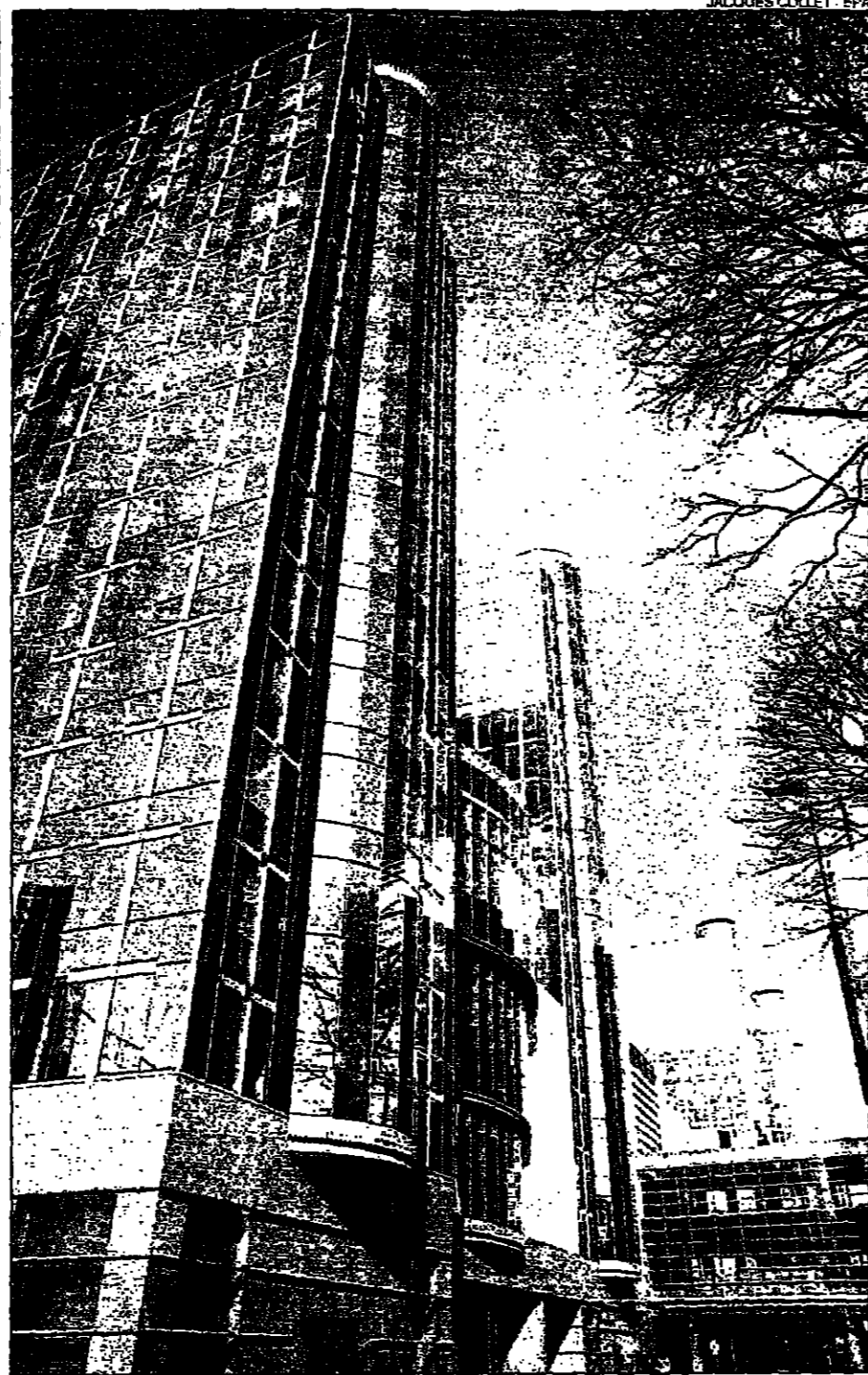
His reported remark that she "loved" the President marks a change from his earlier statement that she was simply a "colleague".

The Treasury, which supervises the Secret Service, yesterday headed closer to a court showdown with Mr Starr over his decision to subpoena Secret Service officers. The Administration argues that the President's life will be put in danger if his security guards can be subpoenaed, because he will keep them at a distance to protect privacy.

Mr Starr's controversial move comes after remarks by Lewis Fox, a retired Secret Service officer, that Ms Lewinsky and Mr Clinton were alone for 40 minutes in the Oval Office.



Fox alleges Oval Office encounter



The new European Parliament building in Brussels which was inaugurated yesterday. The huge complex has been the subject of controversy for years

MEPs' leader defends £670m 'folly of gods'

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

AFTER years of controversy, the European Parliament's new Brussels seat was inaugurated yesterday with a low-key royal ceremony that reflected sensitivity over the monumental grandeur of the edifice.

King Albert and Queen Paola of Belgium heard Jose-Manua Gil-Robles, the parliament's president, give a brief, defensive speech on the merits of the European Union's only directly elected body. He said the 226 MEPs were "doing their best to overcome the problems" imposed on them by member states' insistence on the arrangement.

Under which the institution decamps 250 miles to Strasbourg for one week every month. The £670 million, eight-acre complex, along with a slightly humbler version now nearing completion in Strasbourg, would offer MEPs the "indispensable tools" for representing their voters.

Señor Gil-Robles said. Alluding to the perennial scandal over MEPs' lavish and poorly controlled expenses, he added: "I call on you all to make use of those tools in the correct and scrupulous fashion which our fellow

citizens expect of us." The ceremony marked the culmination of Europe's biggest civil engineering project after the Channel Tunnel.

No national parliament in Europe comes close to the sumptuous appointments and the army of staff and interpreters offered to MEPs by the Leopold complex. While the main chamber in the granite,

steel and glass complex, known locally as Le Caprice des Dieux (folly of the gods), has been used for three years, the inhabitants are still finding their way around the palatial new building that houses 2,500 offices, committee rooms, shops, restaurants and bars.

"It's a scandalous waste of money. This place is supposed to be the shop window of European democracy. What kind of a message do you think this gives the citizens?" mused a French official from the Socialist group.

The mammoth building has attracted a welter of negative publicity, thanks to £7,000 shower-bathroom units attached to all the MEP offices, which also feature drop-down beds.

What message does this give to citizens?



Olympic stadium — double-booked

Operatic walkout in Rome

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE Director of the Rome Opera House, Sergio Escobar, resigned yesterday after discovering that the Rome Olympic Stadium, designated as the venue for this year's summer opera season, had been double-booked for a birthday party.

Signor Escobar said he was amazed to learn that the stadium, which should have resounded to operas by Puccini this July and August, had been booked for a one-day gala athletics meeting to mark the 75th birthday of Primo Nebiolo, the grand old man of Italian athletics. The gala would involve dismantling and re-erecting complex sets, which was out of the question.

Moscow inferno injures 51

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

FIFTY-ONE people were injured in a blaze which broke out on Wednesday near the Kremlin and Bolshoi Theatre in central Moscow and was only brought under control yesterday.

A spokesman for the Moscow fire service said 150 firemen and 49 fire engines and water-bearing helicopters had

been deployed to put out the fire at an office building less than a mile from the Kremlin. The building was still shrouded in smoke yesterday afternoon but the spokesman said the main fire was out. Firefighters had started dismantling the smoking rubble to avoid further outbreaks of fire.

The building, headquarters of Russia's merchant navy, is near Lubyanka Square, a crossroads where the old KGB, now the Federal Security Service, is located. A traffic ban was lifted in districts close to the fire but police cordons were still blocking off a large area.

Last night, a news agency reported that 12 people died when a fire swept through a retirement home in a remote village in the Komi region.

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Cuba promises Vatican it will free dissidents

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

IN WHAT could turn out to be the largest release of political dissidents in Cuba for more than a decade, the Vatican said yesterday that Havana had pardoned dozens of prisoners after a plea from the Pope during his visit to the island last month.

In a communique, the Vatican said Cardinal Angelo Sodano, its Secretary of State, had been informed that "the pardon involves some tens of people whose names appear on a list given to the Cuban authorities on January 22 in the name of the Holy Father". It added that other release requests were also pending. The Vatican said it was delighted by what it called a "concrete prospect of hope".

Details of the pardons were slow to emerge. Most of those expected to be freed appear to be political dissidents, including Omar del Pozo, who was

jailed in 1991 and is serving a 15-year sentence for treason. But the release of up to 100 people is not expected to include some of Cuba's most prominent dissidents, four of whom — Vladimir Roca, Marta Beatriz Roque, Félix Bonne and René Manzano — are in jail awaiting trial on charges of spreading "enemy propaganda". They were arrested last July for publishing a document calling for a peaceful transition to democracy and the pardon is expected to cover only convicted prisoners who have served part of their sentence.

It is also unclear if the releases come with any strings attached. In the past, Cuba has released dissidents on condition that they leave the country. For example, seven human rights activists who had been on hunger strike after their arrest last year,

were apparently released earlier this month after agreeing to go abroad, which they had initially refused to accept.

This time the circumstances may be different. While in Cuba, the Pope called for greater religious freedom and human rights and presented the Government with a list of about 300 prisoners. He requested their release and asked that Cuba create the conditions for their reintegration into society.

Human rights groups say Cuba has about 500 dissidents in jail. The Government denies that it has any political prisoners and argues that supposed dissidents have committed economic crimes or acts against the State.

Rights activists say the Government's recent policy has been to keep down the number of dissidents in jail by forcing them into exile.



Kim Phuc in Toronto with her husband, Toan, after they became Canadian citizens and her agony in a napalm attack in Vietnam in 1972

War victim's tears of pain turn to joy

FROM AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IN TORONTO

THE woman who was photographed naked and weeping as a young girl when she fled an American napalm attack on her Vietnamese village has become a Canadian citizen.

The 1972 picture of Kim Phuc appeared in newspapers around the world after Nick Ut photographed the nine-year-old running along a road with her skin on fire from a US attack during the Vietnam War. Her two brothers were killed in the raid.

At the oath-of-allegiance ceremony on Wednesday, she brushed away tears and said: "I am so happy, extremely

happy." Her photograph was a powerful weapon for anti-war activists and for the Communist opponents of the American-backed regime in the former South Vietnam.

The Vietnamese Government allowed her and her husband to move to Cuba in the early 1990s to study.

But in 1992, during a brief stopover at Gander airport, Newfoundland, the couple defected and were granted asylum. The couple's two sons were born in Canada. Last November, she was appointed by Unesco as a goodwill ambassador.



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Vice-President dies as plane crashes in Sudan rebel zone

BY DAVID ORR IN NAIROBI AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE Sudanese Vice-President, Major-General al-Zubair Muhammad Salih, and two other government officials were killed yesterday when their plane carrying more than 50 passengers crashed in bad weather on the Sobat River in southern Sudan. The Sudan People's Liberation Army said its rebel forces shot the aircraft, but the claim could not be confirmed independently.

The Sudan's official news agency said the officials who died were Moussa Sayed Ahmed, a director of the Supreme Council for Peace, and Arok Thon Arok, a former Independent Group rebel leader.

It reported that two ministers had survived: Brigadier al-Tayeb Ibrahim, Muhammad Khair, the Culture and Information Minister, and Musa Mek Kur, the Animal Resources Minister.

"A number of the cream of the leadership of the nation have been martyred," said President al-Bashir in an address on national television. "Major Salih rests today as a martyr for God and for achieving peace."

The delegation was travelling on a two-day visit to the South, which has been at war

with the Muslim North for the past 15 years. "It was not a crash," said Justin Yeac Arop, a spokesman for the rebel wing of the rebels in Nairobi. The plane was on its way to Juba (in southern Sudan) and it was in an area we control. We shot it down."

General Salih, 54, played a key role in the 1989 coup that brought the Islamic Government to power, serving as a link between disgruntled officers and civilian leaders of the National Islamic Front. He was a close ally of the Front's leader, Hassan Turabi, who serves as the parliamentary speaker.

The southern rebels are fighting for self-determination of their region, which is Christian and animist. The area in which the plane crashed, 500 miles south of the capital, is a stronghold of Riek Machar, a former rebel commander whose faction defected to the government side.

Mr Arop last night accused the Government of bombing civilians in southern areas under their control. He and witnesses on the ground said government planes bombed settlements along the Jur River around the town of Wau, about 600 miles south of Khartoum, the capital.

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SONY

India's low castes taste power

Christopher Thomas reports on the growing challenge to the Hindu hierarchy

the North work on the land, usually for no more than £12 a month, which even in rural India is poverty wages.

Ambedkar, once a near-forgotten figure of history — another act of discrimination — has been revived by Ms Mayawati and other Dalit leaders, giving them a symbol, a hero, and a sense of recent political history. The following men and women listening at yesterday's election rally of her Bahujan Samaj Party were evidence of one of the most far-reaching social changes in India for centuries.

Ms Mayawati, propelled to political prominence by the leader of the party, Kanshi Ram, also a Dalit, was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1995 for just more than four months, and again last year for six months in a chaotic experiment in power sharing with high castes. That the upper castes entered such a deal is a measure of how far they have accepted the new assertiveness of people who not so many years ago would have cringed in the close presence of a Brahmin.

Murta Devi, 40, one of several hundred women in the crowd yesterday, cheered herself nearly hoarse at Ms Mayawati. Her caste is one notch above the Untouchables; she and all those around her made no secret of their rage at being born into the lowest orders. This was the face of an India that was unimaginable a decade ago.

"The upper castes use us to clean and wash for them but they don't let us touch their cooking utensils because we might pollute them," Mrs Devi said.

"I am angry, we are all angry," she snapped. "I feel humiliated that my husband is not equal to other men because of his caste. Those days are over and the upper castes had better realise it."



Untouchables are making their presence felt politically after years of oppression

Japanese look for causes of classroom rebellion

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

THE murder of a teacher by a pupil and a schoolboy knife attack on a policeman have bewildered a nation that prides itself on rigorous classroom discipline and a low rate of violent crime.

Japanese are struggling to make sense of a spate of juvenile crimes dominating news bulletins in the past two weeks. The most horrifying was the fatal stabbing of a woman teacher by a 13-year-old boy angry at being scolded for being late for class.

A few days later, a policeman was stabbed by a boy of 15 attempting to steal his gun. This week, in three separate cases of attempted robbery, police arrested five schoolboys aged between 13 and 15 armed with knives.

The traditional image of Japanese pupils as obedient and respectful has been shattered by the attacks on symbols of authority. One teacher is recovering from injuries sustained when a 15-year-old boy shot him in the face a few days ago. The boy said he was furious at being reprimanded for kicking a door.

The violence has spurred a national debate and, in the search for culprits, television has been blamed for popularising the "butterfly knives" used in many attacks. Sales of this type of flick knife have soared since a teenage idol brandished one in a television drama which has a big juvenile audience.

Isamu Kakimoto, a psychoanalyst, suggests that the craze for video games, cartoon films and books filled with violence stunts emotional development.

"Children totally absorbed in these entertainments have limited contact with other people, and are less likely to develop healthy relationships," Mr Kakimoto said.



President Suharto in Jakarta yesterday

Suharto orders crushing of dissent

FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT IN JAKARTA

PRESIDENT SUHARTO of Indonesia yesterday gave his armed forces carte blanche to contain unrest in the run-up to next month's presidential election.

"Military and legal officials should take firm action without hesitation against whoever and whoever violates the law," he told military commanders. "Certain parties were attempting to undermine law and order by taking advantage of the crippling economic crisis."

Western diplomats say that anti-Suharto pro-democracy groups exist but present no threat to national stability. "Most of their leaders are already in prison," one said. "President Suharto's rhetoric is an attempt to divert attention from his policies, which have caused the crisis."

There has been widespread rioting in protest at the economic collapse. Yesterday, pedicab drivers, angry at soaring food prices, went on a rampage in a western Java town, attacking shops and setting several alight.

The election takes place on March 10 during an 11-day session of the People's Consultative Assembly. President Suharto is seeking a seventh successive term; his re-election is expected as all five factions in the assembly have agreed to renominate him.

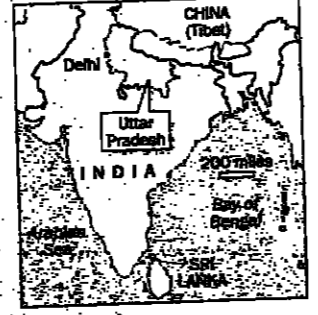
But speculation centres on who will be Vice-President, since the successful candidate will become the front-runner to replace Mr Suharto, 76, who is in uncertain health.

Never in centuries of caste-based discrimination and institutionalised cruelty have the lowest orders of Hinduism embraced such political power as now. They have started a social revolution by uniting under a single political banner in the northern Hindu heartland, forcing those deemed superior by birthright to deal with them as equals.

For Brahmins — 4 per cent of India's population — but dominant in all key centres of national power — and other high castes, this is a humbling, sometimes humiliating experience. The Untouchables are fighting discrimination with the might of their numbers, 120 million nationwide, and in the pivotal northern state of Uttar Pradesh they are 22 per cent of the population. To almost a man, woman and child, they are wretchedly poor. They are also, suddenly, politically powerful.

The trade that inspired them yesterday came from Mayawati, who rose out of the slums of Delhi to become one of the biggest forces for out-caste rebellion since Bhimrao Ambedkar, principal author of the Indian Constitution, led Untouchables in the years spanning independence 50 years ago. In disgust at untouchability, he renounced Hinduism late in life for Buddhism, a gesture emulated by vast numbers of Untouchables since then in a hopeless attempt to escape their onerous birthright.

There was no talk yesterday of conversions, only of a determination to give high castes a taste of their own medicine as the country prepares for the first round of



Bad weather holds up relief for Afghan quake zone

FROM REUTERS IN RUSTAQ, AFGHANISTAN

AID agencies trying to cope with the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in northern Afghanistan said yesterday that they planned an air drop to break the transport deadlock.

"This aid must come tomorrow or the day after at the latest," said Jarle Thorghersen, a member of the International Federation of the Red Cross

in Rustaq, a town near the quake area. Last week, an earthquake measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale destroyed up to 28 remote mud villages. Aid agencies estimated the death toll at 4,500.

More than a week later, aid has still not reached thousands of Afghans who have lost their homes and their livelihoods.

There were clear skies over Rustaq yesterday. But bad weather in neigh-

bouring Tajikistan prevented helicopters with food, tents and blankets from taking off from the former Soviet republic, Mr Thorghersen said.

The only helicopter to reach Rustaq yesterday brought seven bales of supplies, rather than food or other supplies. It belonged to Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Afghan Uz' faction leader. The inhabitants looked on in disbelief as the cash was

unloaded. Foreign aid workers watched in disgust as cameramen for General Dostum's faction filmed the money's arrival. "It's just political," said one. "This will do nothing to help the relief operation."

Mr Thorghersen said that if it was agreed, a Hercules C130 transport plane would make a drop outside Rustaq, probably flying in from Pakistan. In Islamabad, the United Nations and the Red Cross said they

were to make a \$2.5 million (£1.5 million) appeal for the air drop.

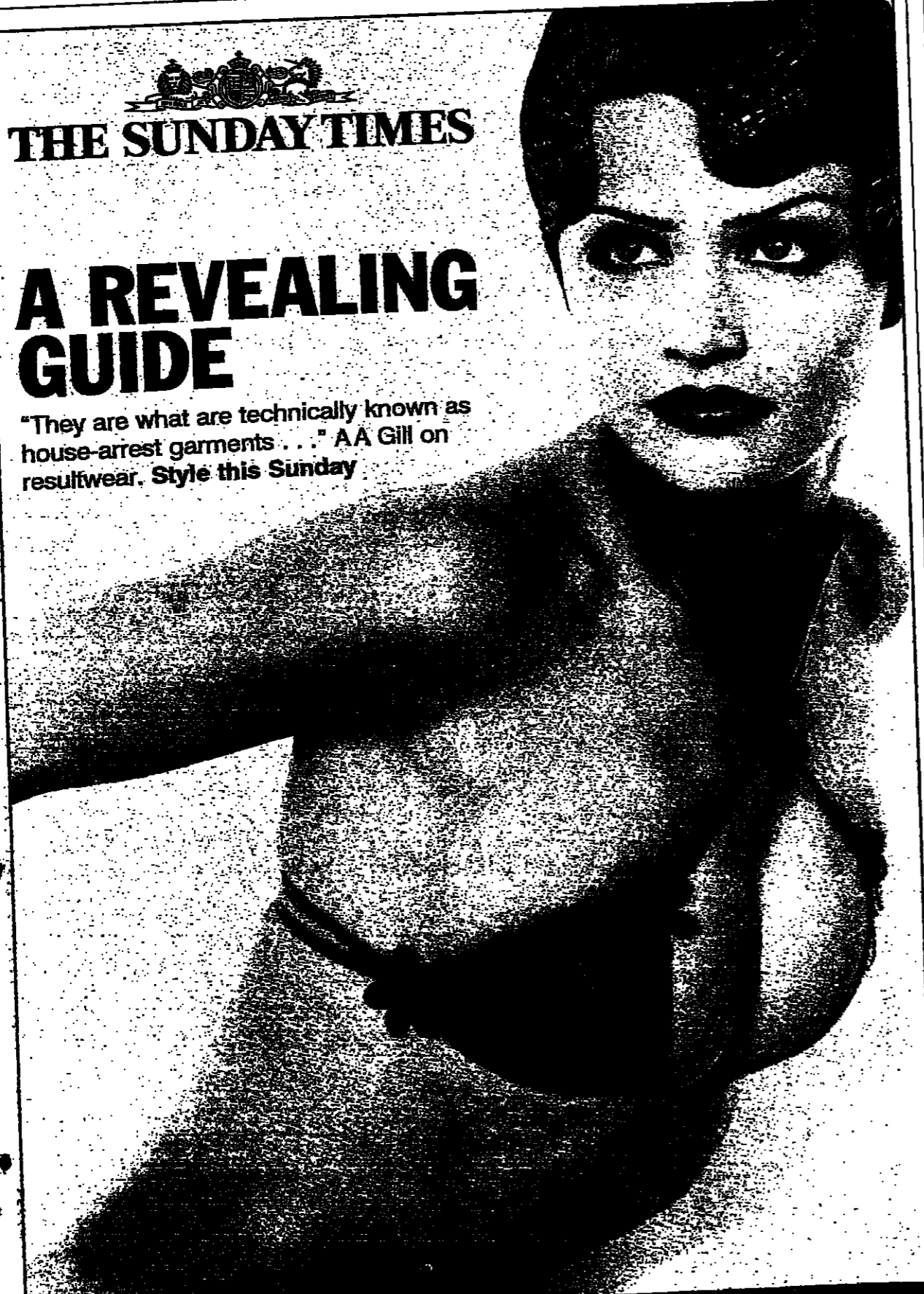
Survivors have walked barefoot through snow and carried wounded on donkeys to find shelter, food and medical attention in Rustaq.

The region is further isolated by the long-running civil war. An alliance opposed to Afghanistan's Islamist Taliban militia, which controls most of the country, holds Rustaq and the surrounding region.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

A REVEALING GUIDE

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Netanyahu: "precautions"

Iran will soon be far greater threat to peace, says Netanyahu

THE Islamic revolutionary regime in Iran could very soon pose a much greater threat to regional and world stability than Iraq, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said last night.

"The entire world's attention is understandably and legitimately focused on Saddam Hussein," he said. "But right across the border in Iran that country is developing freely, without any interference, without any pressure, without any inspectors, ballistic missiles and atomic weapons."

He added: "If you think you have a problem with Saddam in the world today because Saddam has these weapons [of mass destruction], think how unstable our

In an interview with Christopher Walker, the Israeli leader says Tehran is building up a deadly arsenal while the world's attention is focused on the regime in Baghdad

world would be if the Iranian regime acquires ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] that can reach into Europe and well beyond it."

Mr Netanyahu disclosed that, according to Israeli intelligence, it was now only a year before Iran would be self-sufficient in the technology needed to manufacture such long-range missiles. He did

not reveal what, if any, preventive action Israel would take but said he had told President Yeltsin that the technology his country was continuing to provide to Iran could result in Iranian missiles tipped with non-conventional warheads eventually being turned on Russia.

Looking relaxed and confident despite the rising tension in the Gulf and widespread speculation in the Israeli media of possible Iraqi germ warfare attacks on Tel Aviv, Mr Netanyahu said the reports had been "greatly exaggerated".

Sitting in his shirtsleeves, his red scrambler telephone close at hand, the Prime Minister, whose office is close to where minute-by-minute monitoring of Iraqi tactics is being conducted by Israeli military experts, said: "We are taking all the necessary precautions in terms of civil defence and other means we possess."

Mr Netanyahu, who was unhappy with Israel's refusal in 1991 to react against the 39 missiles fired against it by Iraq, refused to

elaborate on his carefully chosen words. But in Tel Aviv diplomatic circles, such remarks are assumed to be a coded reference to a devastating tactical nuclear weapons attack on Baghdad in the event of Israel being hit by a single biological or chemical warhead.

There is uncertainty here about the level of reaction if Saddam were to fire conventional missiles at the Jewish state.

According to diplomatic sources a message about Israel's possible reaction was part of a recent secret exchange of messages between Israel and Iraq conducted via a third diplomatic party. A similar harsh message in 1991 is believed by Israeli sources to be why

Saddam held off then from using his germ warfare arsenal.

Jerusalem: Defying a ban on pro-Iraq rallies, hundreds of Palestinians in the West Bank yesterday marched in support of Saddam, some clashing with Israeli soldiers. The demonstration took place in Nablus and Hebron, two of the most militant Arab cities under the control of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

About 300 students marched from their school in Hebron, carrying Iraqi flags and repeating the chant that was used by Palestinians at the time of the Gulf War - "Beloved Saddam, hit, hit Tel Aviv."

Iraqi warfare scientists sent to Libya haven

UPTO 50 microbiologists and other leading Iraqi scientists have been ordered out of Iraq by President Saddam Hussein to safeguard the brains behind his weapons programmes before the expected American attack on suspect installations.

Most have gone to continue their research at universities in North African countries and are not expected to return home for several months, according to Iraqi sources and Arab diplomats.

The order was given two weeks ago and their wives and families have been kept behind to prevent any scientists defecting. Students in the science department at Baghdad University were sent home and told to enlist in the militia, a one-million-strong "volunteer" force established by Saddam to defend the country and fight a jihad, or holy war, against sanctions.

Saddam's aim is to protect the know-how that could revive his outlawed weapons programmes if stockpiles and buildings are destroyed. The move underlines the limitations of military action unless there is also a plan to oust the Iraqi leader, who will retain the capability to rebuild his weapons industry, dissidents said. Most of the scientists went via Jordan and Tunisia

Iraq is protecting the brains behind its arsenal, writes Michael Theodoulou

to Libya, the most obvious haven. Up to a dozen other Iraqi scientists have been there for several months helping Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, to develop a covert biological weapons programme, according to Western intelligence sources. Others were said to have gone to Algeria, where President Zeroual yesterday met Muhammad Hamza al-Zubaidi, the visiting Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, who has been touring North African countries to rally support for Saddam.

In the meantime, foreign envoys in Baghdad to persuade Saddam to comply with United Nations resolutions on Iraq's disarmament have been astonished by his paranoia. Security men have burst into hotel rooms in the middle of the night to search their luggage and any letters for

Saddam from foreign leaders have been taken away to be photocopied. "Saddam refuses to accept any original letter in case it literally is a poison-pen letter impregnated with deadly bacteria," an Arab diplomat in Jordan said. The envoys were intimately searched, often kept waiting for several hours and taken by circuitous routes to little-used offices for their meeting with Saddam, usually after dark.

As the Iraqi leader takes measures to protect his weapons programmes, the commander of Egyptian forces in the 1991 Gulf War said that Iraq's military was too weak to offer any resistance to an American attack and its only option would be to retreat to underground shelters. "They were unable to do anything when they had the weapons, so how can they do anything when they have become unarmed and are suffering from diseases and hunger?" General Muhammad Bilal told the United Arab Emirates daily, *al-Bayan*. "The only resistance they can put up now is to hide in underground shelters, if there are such shelters."

General Bilal, who led thousands of Egyptian troops without the US-led alliance, said he expected airstrikes to target Iraq's infrastructure because



An operations officer, on board the guided-missile destroyer USS John S. McCain in the Gulf, on duty in the ship's combat direction centre

the "United States knows that Iraq's resistance is zero".

Saddam's army is half the size it was when it invaded Kuwait in 1990 and its capabilities have also been undermined by the arms embargo

and economic sanctions, according to Western military analysts, who said Iraq used to spend £1 billion to £2 billion a year on weapons.

Yet Iraq has maintained a skilful corps of indigenous technicians and engineers, and also adapted civilian technology such as fibre optics and computers to weapons systems, as well as importing some materials through the porous embargo. The number

of active-duty soldiers is down to about 400,000 from a high of one million in 1990 and its main battle tanks are down from 5,500 to 2,700. Even so, Iraq is second in the Gulf region only to Iran in active-duty manpower. Crucially, Operation Desert Storm in 1991 left intact the professional core of Iraq's armed forces because few of the elite Republican Guard forces were affected.

Presidential sites present big target

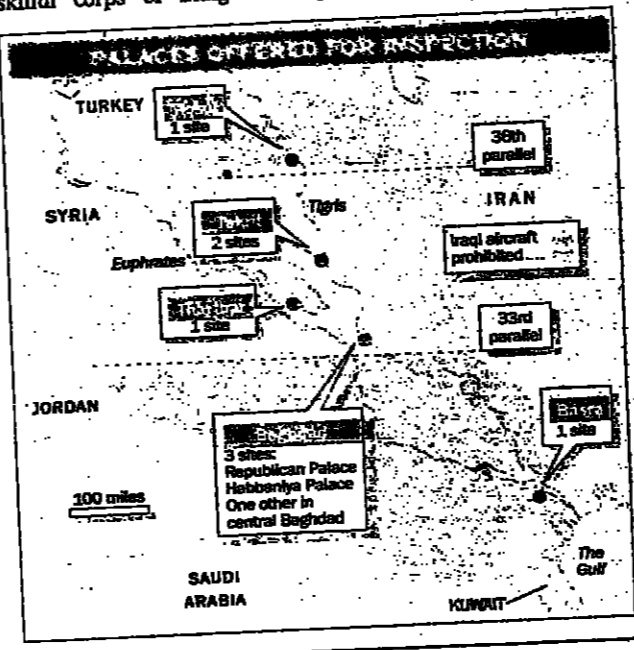
THE eight presidential sites at the core of the conflict with Iraq over United Nations weapons inspections would form a big target area for US and British bombers if military action were ordered.

The Iraqis say these vast complexes include annexes, guest houses, servants' quarters and guard posts. But the UN inspectors claim they contain intelligence posts, hangars, bunkers and arms depots that could perhaps be stores for chemical weapons.

For countries with a low-technology threshold, biological arms are the easiest and cheapest to make of all weapons of mass destruction.

Any country intent on developing a covert germ warfare programme need only acquire "dual-use" equipment such as fermenters, centrifugal separators and freeze dryers and materials legitimately used by the agricultural, chemical and medical industries.

The CIA has estimated that 400 companies worldwide manufacture key dual-use equipment that could be used to make biological or chemical weapons.



Resolution faces rough ride at UN

BRITAIN admitted yesterday that its proposal for a United Nations resolution condemning Iraq had run into trouble. But George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said that diplomacy, backed with the threat of force, was starting to win results.

The Foreign Office said there were differences between the five permanent members of the Security Council on the timing and content of a resolution. As a result, it could not be tabled as early as Britain wanted. "It could be tomorrow, or at the weekend or next

week," the spokesman said. Britain still insisted that such a resolution would send a "strong signal" about what the international community believed. But there was no agreement yet on language or on the question of whether it would specifically authorise the UN to use force.

The Americans are sceptical of the need for a new resolution, which they fear could limit their freedom of manoeuvre. The Russians and the Chinese oppose any wording that would give a green light to an airstrike.

Robin Cook, leading a Euro-

pean Union delegation to Latin America, yesterday talked to Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State. He insists that Britain is not seeking to "humiliate" Iraq, and has already found much common ground with the other Security Council partners. All agree that the objectives of disarmament must be preserved, together with the status of the UN Special Commission.

Mr Cook, in Panama with five other EU foreign ministers and deputy ministers from other European partners, briefed his colleagues on Iraq but did not try to coordinate a single EU policy. Britain has been criticised in

Europe for failing to use its presidency to draw up a common policy, but rejected the accusation. The Foreign Office said that the crisis had been discussed in Brussels at political director level.

Derek Fatchett, the Foreign Office Minister of State, ended a tour of the Gulf and Egypt after a meeting in Cairo with Amr Moussa, the Egyptian Foreign Minister.

He said there was no deadline by which Iraq must comply with UN resolutions on weapons inspections or face military action. "The ball is in Saddam Hussein's court. He can decide. He can comply. It's not so difficult. I can arrange it here and now."

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Sergeev: "serious consequences" Kremlin chief in row with Cohen

FROM RICHARD BERTON IN MOSCOW

THE Russian and US defence ministers clashed over Iraq yesterday at a meeting clouded by reports that Moscow may have helped Baghdad in its germ warfare programme.

Marshal Igor Sergeev, the Russian Defence Minister, warned William Cohen, his visiting US counterpart, that the use of force against Iraq could have serious consequences for relations between the two countries.

Moscow 'tried to sell germ plant to Saddam'

FROM IAN BRIDIE IN WASHINGTON AND JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

UNITED NATIONS weapons inspectors are pressing Moscow to explain evidence that Russia negotiated to sell equipment to Iraq that could have been used to help President Saddam Hussein build germ-warfare weapons.

The inflammatory accusation prompted renewed questions in Washington yesterday over Russia's motives in Iraq and was accompanied by warnings that Russian spies may have passed information about weapons inspections to Baghdad. The claim provoked furious denials in Moscow.

RUSSIA

where Gemadi Tarasov, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, described suggestions that Russia had made any deal involving banned technology as "crude inventions".

However, a source close to the UN weapons inspectorate in New York confirmed that last autumn an inspection team uncovered evidence of a July 1995 agreement by Moscow to sell Iraq a "complete fermentation plant".

A confidential document prepared by Iraqi officials and seized by the UN team from a building in Baghdad described lengthy negotiations between Saddam's regime and Moscow leading to a deal worth millions of pounds.

germs to be used for warheads of biological missiles. A UN source said a tank of this size could produce 500 litres of weapons-grade anthrax during a single run of four days - enough to fill the warheads of three Scud missiles. Indeed, a 5,000-litre tank would be ten times larger than the biggest vessel Iraq has admitted using.

Having received no formal reply, the UN inspectors are unclear if Iraq did smuggle the Russian fermentation plant into the country, a transaction that would have broken the UN embargo on the regime importing dual-use equipment without approval from the Security Council's sanctions committee.

Saddam's weapons scientists are known to be still evading the restrictions. In the past six months, they were found to have concealed a 350-litre fermenter, made in Iraq, at the former nuclear weapons installation at Tuwaitha. Iraq is also believed to have tried to import a fermenter from Poland within the past three years.

A UN official said: "We've seen a lot of information about attempts to obtain equipment that is dual-use. We also know they have the indigenous capacity to produce equipment. It all adds up to an extremely active interest in developing biological weapons."

Iraqi officials who participated in the negotiations with Moscow were said to be from al-Hakam, Iraq's main germ



A Royal Navy officer in white tropical uniform talks to mechanics beside a Sea Harrier on board the carrier HMS Invincible yesterday

warfare site, where tons of anthrax and botulinum toxin were produced before the premises were blown up by UN inspectors. The lethal stockpiles were overseen by at least half a dozen British-educated Iraqis, including Rihab Rashida Taha, known as "Dr Germ", who studied

with the Russian UN mission, which was supposed to have passed the letter to Moscow. The UN's discovery of apparent Russian dealings with Iraq has raised questions in Washington about whether Moscow's recent diplomatic drive to help to resolve the crisis over UN weapons in-

gyrosopes, fished out of a river by inspectors, came from Russia's long-range ballistic missile programme. US intelligence agencies have privately given UN officials a warning that Russian intelligence agencies have been spying on the weapons inspectors in New York and overseas to try to establish where the next inspections will take place, according to The Washington Post account, confirmed by other sources.

At least some Russians are suspected of tipping off the Iraqis in advance of a search, giving them time to spirit away any evidence of illegal weapons manufacture. The purpose is to block the inspectors' effectiveness. One episode of apparent Russian spying took place in the unlikely setting of Basingstoke.

Suspensions were aroused also by Moscow's successful insistence that Nikita Smidovich, a Russian weapons specialist, should no longer lead the inspectors' most important

missions. The view among some UN officials is that Russia was either bending to Iraq's complaints about the inspections, or Mr Smidovich was not complying with Moscow's wishes.

Iraq and Russia have jointly demanded wider participation by Russians on the weapons commission. The names of 60 Russians willing to help have been submitted by Russian diplomats.

American officials have few doubts why Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, has been insisting that Russians approved by Moscow be appointed as chief inspectors for the teams: they are the only individuals who know in advance where an inspection will occur. Mr Aziz is also close to Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister.

Russia's purpose in currying favour with Iraq is to reassert its influence in the region.

Moscow furiously rejects as crude inventions any suggestions of a deal involving banned technology

plant diseases at the University of East Anglia. The UN letter seeking information from the Russians was dated January 6, but Mr Tarasov claimed it was only sent last Sunday and that Russian officials learn of it after the allegations first surfaced yesterday in The Washington Post. UN officials could not explain the delay but thought that the answer lay

specimens may be motivated more by a wish to avoid exposure as collaborators than a desire to avert a military strike. Also, a detailed investigation by the weapons inspectors of Iraq's previously known purchase in 1995 of missile gyroscopes from Russia has been linked to Russian defence companies and not just shady middle men as Moscow had claimed. The

Egyptian prisoners set free

FROM AFP IN BAGHDAD

IRAQ released a first group of 24 Egyptian prisoners yesterday in line with President Saddam Hussein's decision to free all Arab inmates, the Egyptian interest section said.

An official at the mission said there were another 554 Egyptian prisoners in Iraqi jails. Saddam approved the releases as a gesture to woo Arab support in his standoff with America. Legal charges are also to be dropped against Arab suspects.

Leading article, page 23

Advertisement for acupuncture treatment. Text: "Doctor, I've got pins and needles." Acupuncture is now being recommended as a treatment for a variety of disorders from high blood pressure to hay fever. Discover more about the world of alternative treatments in healing, the free, six part guide to complementary medicine. Part two. In The Times tomorrow. If you missed part one call 01525 851945.

OfficeStation 233 Multimedia Special advertisement. Features: 64Gb Hard Disk, 64Mb RAM, 56K Voice Modem, VideoPhone Receive, 233M OfficeStation, 233M-2 OfficeStation, 41 UK Showrooms, EXEC Models, Buy Now... Pay July '98. Price: £1173.83. Freephone Time Now! 0800 771107. COMPUTER SYSTEMS.

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This velvet clutch bag will get you noticed. It is big enough to hold more than a lipstick and comes in pale blue, burgundy and black. Hold me clutch bag, £59, by J S Carrier, available by mail order (070500 49191).

Straight from the heart



Be my Valentine: impress that special person in your life with one of our alternative gift ideas

SIX OF THE BEST

YOU may not agree with the concept of Valentine's Day, but can you afford to ignore it? Here are six of the best alternative gifts to mark the occasion.

SILVER FLASK BY TATEOSSIOAN
Solid silver flask, £340. If you buy one by mail order today, you will receive a free love-heart necklace which is valued at £80. Mail-order deliveries made overnight (0171-351 5671). 10/10

CHAMPAGNE FLUTES BY WATERFORD CRYSTAL
These champagne flutes are the perfect way to toast the future. Millennium love flutes, £54.95 per pair (0800 383940). 8/10

ROSE AND THORN STEM WATCH BY SWATCH
Stamp your love on her wrist with this watch. Rose and Thorn Watch, £29.50 each. Available at major department stores and duty-free outlets. 7/10

LOVE POTION AND SILVER HEART PERFUME BOTTLE BY PENHALIGAN
For women only. Spray this love pheromone on yourself and capture the man of your dreams. Love potion, £15, perfume holder, £85. Penhaligan, 41 Wellington St, London WC2, or call freephone 0800 716 108. 8/10

AQUAMANT WATCH BY PATEK PHILIPPE
This watch is in high demand. The sleek design has a waffle strap, perfect for the city or subterranean sea levels. Diving watch, £3,845. 01753 891348. 9/10

CHOCOLATE HEART BY SIMPLY DELICIOUS
Water-thin dark chocolate with white chocolate drizzles. Looks and tastes divine. £8 for pack of six. Mail order: 0171-490 4548. 9/10

COMPILED BY DEBORAH BRETT PHOTOGRAPHS BY DES JENSON

NOT TIP

For those still searching for a romantic gift idea, Garrard The Crown Jeweller has opened a Valentine hotline. Callers will be advised on romantic yet original gifts, from pearls, semi-precious stones and diamonds to smaller presents, including silver heart dishes, key rings and porcelain. Call 0171-734 7020 or visit the showroom at 112 Regent Street, W1. Silver key ring, £95. Silver heart dish, £135.

To my Valentine

Here are some things that I would definitely not like for Valentine's Day. Rude chocolate panels embossed with scenes from the *Kama Sutra*. Chocolate of any kind, in fact, except very good quality rose and violet creams. Long-stemmed roses, the red of arterial blood, with no discernible scent, or even worse, a dozen unfortunate blooms, freeze-dried, impaled on florists' spikes and crammed into a nasty little heart-shaped wickerwork basket. The sort of roses I like are almost black — and smell penetratingly of rose.

I would also not like any underwear, thanks all the same. I take the view that my underpinnings are my own affair. Heart-shaped, red rubber hot-water bottles, scarlet maribou smiles, anything bearing the image of that long-suffering brace of cherubs from Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* — none of these is likely to make me fall out of bed with gratitude.

Dear oh dear. For poor St Valentine, gazing down from his place among the choir invisible, each February 14 must seem like a re-enactment of his martyrdom.

Why do people do it — rush out and spend good money on such astonishingly nasty things? Well, of course, it is what an old boss of mine used to call the Tyranny of Gifts.

Once upon a time, we might have felt aggrieved not to be given a Christmas present. But now the burden of expectation is such that we are in danger of feeling let down every other month — Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter ... Amazing, really, that Whitsun has not become a marketing opportunity, with promotional offers on real-flame gas fires, and Speaking in Tongues language tapes.

Still, I should not like anyone to get the impression from any of the above that I take no interest in Valentine's Day. On the contrary, I expect I shall be sitting by the front door, pointing like a bird dog every time I hear a step that might be that of the man from the flower shop. I suppose all I am doing, really, is nerving myself against possible disappointment. It is so easy for a chap to get it wrong, and although one's kindly nature prevents one, when presented with some object of horror accompanied by the words "Darling, I saw this and thought of you", from doing anything other than saying thank you very nicely, it is the sort of thing that festers in the memory and resurfaces later, to damaging effect.

Best, really, to avoid this sort of muddle in the first place. First of all, you have to decide whether you are trying to marry the girl or merely see as much of her as you can in the next couple of months. If I had an impecunious and not very serious suitor, I might direct him to Agatha, the wonderfully stylish French costume jewellery merchants, whose shop in South Molton Street, London W1, is stuffed with pretty pieces at paupers' prices. My favourite is a pair of filigree paste, heart-shaped earrings at £46.

The Victorians had an admirable weakness for hearts, bluebirds and forget-me-nots, as a quick look around any good provincial jewellers will show. Best to avoid Bond Street and its absurd prices, unless you are in love with Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, in which case you had better visit AB Davis in Brook Street, W1, where there is a little gold tennis racket, its handle encircled by a seed-pearl heart. They also have some good, plain paste heart earrings set in 9ct gold for £65.

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ARTS

A cold shower of awkward facts: Richard Morrison on why the Government needs to take a long, hard look at its new "friends" in the music industry
Arts, Pages 35-38

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A fateful invitation

Death of a PRINCESS

In the fourth extract from their book about the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, Thomas Sancton and Scott MacLeod recount the St Tropez holiday during which the romance began

The English National Ballet benefit performance on June 3 was one of the most successful productions of Swan Lake that Britain had ever seen - raising tens of thousands of pounds in support of the company's forty-sixth season. But for Diana, Princess of Wales, the ballet's patron for the past eight years, that evening at the Royal Albert Hall would have a special, and fateful, significance.

Wearing an elegant and revealing powder-blue Jacques Azagury evening dress, the Princess was viewing the performance from the royal box of the semi-circular Victorian auditorium. Seated near her was the now-tied Mohamed Al Fayed. After the performance, the Princess and the chairman of Harrods wound up next to each other at a gala dinner at the Churchill Intercontinental Hotel.

Al Fayed had often invited the Princess to join his family on holiday, and now she leant over her roast lamb and lentil supper - and asked: "Where are you going this summer?"

"St Tropez," Al Fayed replied. "If you want to come, you are most welcome."

"So are you sticking to your invitation?" the Princess laughed. "Of course," said Al Fayed. "Make up your mind."

Al Fayed was undoubtedly aware that, being a divorced royal with two school-aged boys, her holiday options were minimal. "She could no longer go to the royal estates," explains a friend. "She couldn't go to Balmoral; she couldn't go to Highgrove; she couldn't go to Sandringham. And she has two strapping sons. How can she keep them in a palace during the summer?"

The Princess rang Michael Cole at his new South Kensington mews house to inquire about St Tropez and what sort of holiday might be in store. Al Fayed's four children were roughly the same ages as Prince William and Prince Harry. And her paramount concern was to enable her sons to have a great time.

On June 11, the Princess wrote an affectionate "Dear Mohamed" note in black felt pen on her personal red-bordered salmon stationery. She formally thanked him for his invitation to St Tropez - friends regarded her as the best thank-you letter writer they knew.

Michael Cole followed up with a note on July 2 that succinctly outlined the many facilities available at Al Fayed's Côte d'Azur estate and provided a timetable for the travel arrangements. It had everything one could possibly want for a lovely holiday, he said, including privacy; the family's compound was situated high on a cliff and was not overlooked. "Mr Al Fayed will send a helicopter for you," Cole informed the Princess. Presuming the her desire for discretion, he added: "If we handle this thing properly, nobody will ever even know that you've gone. The idea is that you have a quiet, private, family holiday."

St Tropez, however, was probably the worst place in the world to go for privacy. Notorious as one of the trendiest spots on the Côte d'Azur, it is packed bikini to bikini in the summer months with millionaire yachtsmen, playboys, gigolos, gamblers, bronze-breasted bimboes, and celebrity-stalking paparazzi. A London newspaper cartoon lampooning the Princess's choice of vacation spots depicted her on a desert island throwing bottles out to sea stuffed with SOS notes that read: "I want to be alone."

ments for the boys were made with the Prince of Wales's chief of security, Colin Trimmings. At 3.20pm, following a light lunch, the Princess, Prince William, 15, and Prince Harry, 12, accompanied by Al Fayed, his wife, Heidi, and four children, took off for St Tropez. There they boarded Al Fayed's executive jet for the flight to Nice. The party was driven a few minutes away to the small harbour of St-Laurent-du-Var, where they boarded Al Fayed's yacht, the *Jonikal*, for the long cruise westward to St Tropez.

Castel Ste Hélène, Al Fayed's ten-acre estate high on the cliffs above the sea, is anchored by a ten-bedroom, cream-coloured, century-old villa that once belonged to the Suez Canal builder Ferdinand de Lesseps. When the party finally arrived at 8.20pm, Heidi led the Princess, Prince William and Prince Harry to the "fisherman's cottage", the eight-bedroom quarters for the guests, set just down the hill from the main villa and boasting its own butler, cook, swimming pool, tennis court, and view of the sea.

A mile-long row of steps leads down to the sea, a private beach and pier. From there, a launch shuttles guests out to the *Jonikal*, a 140ft motor yacht, with 20 cabins and a crew of 16, an impressive vessel purchased only a month earlier from a Milanese textile magnate.

That night the holidaymakers had a light supper at the villa followed by a stroll through St Tropez. Over the next ten days, the Al Fayed and their guests abandoned themselves to the pleasures and privileges of wealthy seaside vacationers. Delighting in horseplay with Al Fayed's security men, among them former Royal Marines, the young Princes went sailing, jet-skiing, and scuba diving, or splashed in the water at the villa's private beach and swimming pools. An excellent athlete, Prince William took to performing 30ft swallow dives from the *Jonikal's* top deck. On several evenings, the Princess and the boys walked into St Tropez for dinner.

They were not always alone. The Princess had scarcely awakened from her first night at Castel Ste Hélène when reporters and photographers began streaming towards St Tropez. By the end of the first afternoon, fuzzy pictures were already being wired back to London newspapers of a man who looked like Mohamed Al Fayed and a young woman who looked like the Princess.

The Princess's close friend Rosa Monckton, president of Tiffany & Co, who had asked the Princess to be godmother to her daughter, had "strongly advised her not to go on holiday with the Al Fayed's". But the Princess heard the same advice from other friends. Their concerns were based on the same logic: whatever the truth about Al Fayed, he was so controversial a figure in England that a holiday with him and his family was bound to create unpleasantness.

The Princess told friends that she didn't see Mohamed that way at all. The Princess could be surprisingly naive about current affairs, and strongly loyal to those who treated her well.

On Monday, with the Sunday tabloid barbs still stinging in her ears, she made her first and only attempt to get the photographers to go away. She got into a launch with bodyguard and charmed straight towards a motorboat



The Princess thanked Al Fayed for a holiday that was "wonderful and magical" and gave her a "great deal of happiness"

called the *Fancy*, bearing three British reporters and three British cameramen 150 yards offshore. Pulling alongside the craft, she asked them how long they intended to maintain their watch. She was embarrassed by the press attention, says James Whitaker, of *The Mirror*, clearly worried that it might disturb her sons' holiday. According to the reporters, she then launched into a remarkable monologue, hinting that because of the constant scrutiny, she might quit Britain and reside in a foreign country.

The next day, the Princess had Kensington Palace issue a statement saying she had been "misquoted", leaving the press to wonder whether the Queen had pressured her to reverse her comments about living abroad.

Her complaints about the St Tropez press gang - not to mention the hysterical denunciations of the paparazzi after her death - obscured a fact that was well established in British press circles: the Princess was only too willing to cooperate with photographers when they made her look good.

On one occasion, she appeared in a swimsuit for a host of French journalists and put on an amazing show. The French had been allowed to stay close to the *Jonikal*. They witnessed the Princess descend to the water, catch hold

of a dangling rope and swing "like Jane out of Tarzan" into the water. Later, the grateful French press pitched in and sent her 100 red roses.

What largely drew the Princess to the Al Fayed's was the warm atmosphere that surrounded the family. A week at Castel Ste Hélène only confirmed her view of Mohamed as an affectionate *paterfamilias*. In this setting, despite Dodi's playboy image, she was able to see another side of him: the warm-blooded Mediterranean soul, strongly attached to the traditions of family, completely at ease with children - including hers.

In short, the holiday had an easygoing ambience that was lacking at Balmoral or Sandringham. The Princess declared as much the day after returning to London when she penned a lots-of-love thank-you note to "Dearest Mohamed". Her words indicated strong affection and thus belies the notion that Al Fayed enticed her to St Tropez as part of a cynical public relations ploy. "I miss you all enormously," she started out in girlish handwriting, going on to thank Al Fayed for giving her and the boys a "wonderful and magical" holiday and a "great deal of happiness". She did not mention Dodi by name, but seemed to make an oblique reference when she said: "I

think your entire flock are hugely special."

Mohamed and Heidi received touching handwritten thank-yous from her sons as well. Prince William was grateful for the "superb holiday" and noted: "The *Jonikal* was an amazing piece of kit and I loved sailing on it." Prince Harry said he liked the villa and the delicious meals, too. "You both were extremely generous to Mum, William and I and we really appreciated it," he wrote.

"She told me afterwards that it was the best holiday of her life," says a friend. "She saw a close, happy family, telling jokes and enjoying being together. OK, they are very rich people, but they give the impression they would be having just as good a time if they were not. Dodi was gentle, kind, patient and unthreatening. He is not the sort of person who is going to ask you 'How many A levels did you get at school?'"

It is unknown whether Diana or Dodi ever confided to anyone the precise moment when the sparks started flying, but the Al Fayed did notice that they were getting along well. Heidi, as a Finn married to an Egyptian for 20 years, was keenly aware of the different worlds the Princess and Dodi came from. "But when they were together, they were SO together," she would remark later. "They had a shared sense of having fun. They loved talking about films, and loved the same sort of films." Once, when somebody recommended they see *Art*, a hit West End play, they simultaneously made faces and agreed they would see any film before going to a play.

The Princess, her sons and their hosts finally packed up and left Castel Ste Hélène at sunset on Sunday evening. "It was laughter from early in the morning until we went to bed each night," Heidi would say later. "But, in Finland, we have a saying: 'After too much laughter, tears.'"

'I cannot work for anyone else, only Dodi'

THE BUTLER

René Delorm opens the door of the second-floor apartment and ushers us into the foyer, with its geometric marble floors and crystal chandelier. At 55, standing about 5ft 6in, René is trim and fit, elegantly dressed in a grey silk jacket, maroon turtleneck, black wool pleated trousers and black loafers. Wire-rimmed glasses frame his lean, tanned face. There is warmth and sadness in his brown eyes.

"We didn't touch anything since that night," Dodi Fayed's butler explains in his accented English. "We just cleaned up. Mr Al Fayed wants the apartment to stay just the way his son left it, as if he were coming back."

René is proud to show off the ten-room apartment on Rue Arsène-Houssaye. He takes us through a small salon and on to a wrought-iron balcony. To the right stands the Arc de Triomphe, to the left the Champs Elysées. Looking out on that panorama, one can't help thinking how different things might have been if Henri Paul had taken this stately thoroughfare, for all its traffic lights and bumper-to-bumper traffic. Next to the salon is the green living room, where Diana, Princess of Wales, left her luggage and dressed for dinner on that Saturday evening. René can't say for sure where she would have slept that night as he points out: "They never spent the night here. They never came back."

René takes us through the main living room, with its high ceilings, two large sofas, a pink marble-topped coffee table, a white marble mantelpiece, a large television set, one of half a dozen scattered through the apartment, stands blank and mute in the corner. Here and there are framed pictures of Dodi with film stars.

But it is in the intimacy of the master bedroom where Dodi's spirit seems most present. A king-sized bed with a gold bedspread dominates the room. Brocade and silk curtains frame the tall windows. On the mantelpiece is a collection of medicine bottles - vitamin E-400, folic acid, Tylenol, Tylenol - that bear witness to his health mania. There are three stuffed bears on a table by the marble fireplace, stuffed animals are to be found throughout the apartment.

One by one, René opens the

mirror-covered doors to the wardrobes that line the south wall. In one, there are 15 suits - all Armani, all dark. On the floor, neatly arranged, are three or four pairs of cowboy boots. To the left, a narrow chest of drawers, labelled by category: boxer shorts, underwear, socks, sweat pants. "He asked me to put labels on because he's very meticulous," says René, still speaking in the present tense. "He's very organised, very neat."

In the next wardrobe, the shelves are stacked high with designer jeans, slacks, elegant wool and cashmere sweaters. Lined up on hangers are half a dozen jackets and a dozen flowery silk shirts. It is from these very wardrobes that Dodi chose the suede jacket, jeans and cowboy boots that he wore the night he died.

The rest of the visit takes us through marble bathrooms, guest rooms, an exercise room, two kitchens, the butler's quarters. There are more framed pictures, more televisions, more stuffed bears, more exquisite *faux-marbre* wall, tapestries, Persian carpets.

There are no "Rosebud" revelations here. Only silence and space, and the sadness of René Delorm. His eyes tear up a little when he tells how Mohamed Al Fayed came to the apartment the night his son died. "He said 'René, you took care of my son. I'll take care of you'. How can a man think of the worries of someone else when his son has just died? I couldn't believe it."

But René says he can't accept Al Fayed's offer to take him on as his own butler. "I cannot work for anyone else, only for Dodi. I spent eight years of my life with Dodi. I left everybody in LA - my son, my girlfriend, my friends, my family. When I heard he died, I cried like a baby."

René is heading back to California, the sunny haven that this wandering Moroccan Jew long ago decided to call home. He had left it all behind to accompany a lonely Egyptian playboy on his quest for happiness and paternal approval. Dodi almost had both in his grasp. "It was a wonderful life," says René. "There were dinner parties, cruises, movie stars. And the Princess was going to come into his life. Then... pssst! It all went away."



Dodi Fayed: lonely

'It was laughter from early in the morning until we went to bed each night'

TOMORROW IN WEEKEND
Were the Princess and Dodi killed because they posed a threat to the monarchy, or were their deaths simply the consequence of a tragic car crash?

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Blair has no time for the unions

But he may throw them the bone of recognition, says John Lloyd

The progressive political classes of Britain have needed the organised working class for all of this century. They will not in the next. Tony Blair is the Labour leader who must live through the transition and teach the unions this truth.

Until the 1990s, they paid the party's expenses and at least formally controlled its policy. When in the early 1980s various figures were proposing themselves for the deputy leadership of the party, I attended a dinner given by the steelworkers' union during their annual conference for Peter Shore, who was seeking their support. The union's general secretary, Bill Sims, was a genial, decent but vain rightwinger. He gave a brutally humorous little speech about Shore and then demanded that all present tell a lie in rotation. It must have been humiliating to a man accustomed to power and averse to joke-telling. But it was the bottom line, the remainder of a homage that had to be paid.

Now no more. Tony Blair can be the avenging angel for all progressive politicians who have smarted under union restraints. The workers by brain whom he represents are now more numerous than the workers by hand. They are often highly educated, ideologically foodiose, interested in consumption and pleasure. They work in small companies which have no dealings with unions, or in large ones which constrain them with no-strike clauses. Either way, the technocracy is not bothered by unions, let alone tempted to join them. Getting off a corporate jet to address the 1995 TUC Congress, Blair turned to the industrialists who had been his hosts: "I'd much rather get on talking to you than to this lot," he said.

One of Mr Blair's innovations is to end the capital-labour duopoly of British party finance, making for companies a buyers' market in which they can indicate their pleasure with policies through the deployment of their wallets. He has obeyed the law of the marketplace; he has provided a choice — and must work under its demands.

Business not only has the money, it has the ideas, the strategy and the technology. It also possesses the media. The Labour leadership did not oppose the Lords amendment on predatory newspaper pricing simply because it owes a debt to Rupert Murdoch. Downing Street believes the amendment cannot work as law; it demands that government retain a grip on the sentiments (or the consciences) of many of his Cabinet colleagues. He will try to make the bosses accept recognition but give the unions a tough threshold to cross before they get it.

Not, probably the has not yet decided, as high as a majority of the workforce. Certainly not as high as the doorstep of No 10 is for union leaders. But enough to show they are doing some real work to be accepted in new Labour Britain, where everything is expected to show what use it is.

The author is associate editor of the New Statesman.

spend on politics and the Labour Party needs money. Secondly, they could render more fragile Britain's economic recovery. They claim that, given recognition and fair treatment, they can improve both intra-company communications and productivity. They are one of the social partners which have, through the EU, a quasi-statutory existence.

Least of all the members of the Cabinet does the Prime Minister believe in the second of these rationales. He sees the unions still as "this lot", their policy ideas bore him. Unlike his senior colleagues, he does not schmooze them; he meets regularly only John Monks, the TUC General Secretary; he has no personal friends among their leaders.

And now it's up to him and only to him to decide if he will give them the law on union recognition they so desperately want. This is the prize Mr Monks must gain. If his strategy of endorsement of new Labour is to be accepted, it is a pledge. It must be delivered.

But it is an ambiguous pledge. The manifesto does not make it clear if a majority of the given workforce is required to vote for a union before it must be recognised, or if a majority of those voting is all that is required. The horrors of both variants are now being deployed: the first could see 70 per cent of a 70 per cent turnout voting for a union and failing to achieve it. The second, 51 per cent of 3 per cent of the workers exposing the apathetic majority to the rigours of collective bargaining.

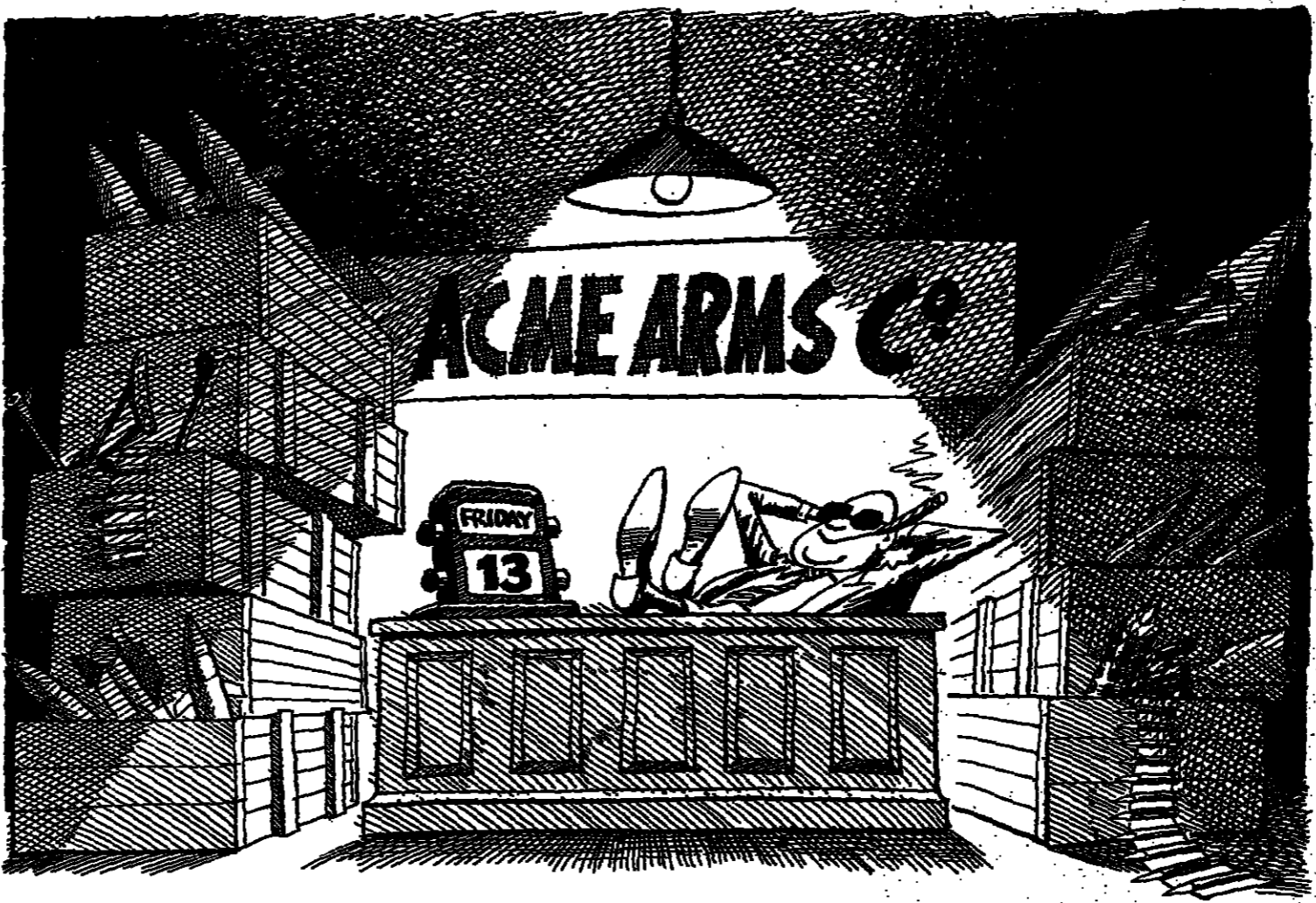
The TUC and the CBI had been told to agree a compromise on this. Good relations between Mr Monks and Adair Turner, the CBI's Director General, were supposed to ease the agreement. But both men were limited by their constituencies: the unions know the very low turnout at workplace elections means they could expect to win a tiny number of all-workforce votes. The managers want to keep a status quo which has allowed them to create the most flexible working practices of any major European economy.

Both now look to Tony Blair. He does not want to rig the labour market in favour of the unions; and he hates the thought of his Government being dragged in to adjudicate between two sides of industry.

But he is a Labour Prime Minister. He could have removed the pledge before the election and did not. New Labour is still Labour and retains a grip on the sentiments (or the consciences) of many of his Cabinet colleagues. He will try to make the bosses accept recognition but give the unions a tough threshold to cross before they get it.

Not, probably the has not yet decided, as high as a majority of the workforce. Certainly not as high as the doorstep of No 10 is for union leaders. But enough to show they are doing some real work to be accepted in new Labour Britain, where everything is expected to show what use it is.

The author is associate editor of the New Statesman.



"I'M FEELING LUCKY..." Peter Brookes

Freedom to be private

Our politicians too often overlook the value the public places on privacy

On Sunday Jeremy Bentham will be 250 years old. It seems a good time to glance again at the idea of liberty he and his philosophical heir, J.S. Mill, did so much to popularise — and to glance from a Conservative viewpoint.

Bentham's and Mill's concept of liberty was given modern expression by the Wolfenden Committee on Homosexuality and Prostitution, as a preface to their recommendations in 1957. Where an individual's behaviour does not harm another, "is a realm which is, in brief and crude terms, not the law's business".

The sentiment, expressed in popular language, is potent to raise a cheer in many circles, including Conservative circles. There is nothing unconservative in the idea that interference in the lives of individuals is to be regretted, unless good reason can be shown. But of course we also believe in Law; and Law is interference. And so the question arises: what is "good reason" to interfere?

Bentham, Mill and the tradition of ethical liberalism to which they belong propose Harm to Others as the test. The argument has a tempting simplicity. The aim: Maximising liberty. So constraint upon liberty is to be justified only when, and only to the extent that, the behaviour constrained itself diminishes the liberty of others. If a man is in the habit of beating his wife and the police stop him, his liberty has undeniably been diminished; but not by as much as his wife's has been enhanced. A restriction upon liberty has added to the general sum of liberty.

Yet Conservative moralists have always had reservations about making Harm to Others the only test of what is, and is not, the State's business. We are faintly suspicious, though we may not be sure why, of any talk of the "victimless" crime. I can suggest three reasons for this.

The first is that there has always been a streak of authoritarianism in our party. Unlike the Tory libertarians, I don't think it can be stripped away from the personality of Conservatism, or that it should be. Conservative voters have a strong sense of right and wrong, of duty, of authority, of paternalism, of discipline — and some sense of hierarchy, too.

To the authoritarian mind, calling behaviour "victimless" does not necessarily mean it is unobjectionable. The Ten Commandments are not framed from the perspective of potential victims, but from the perspective of a deity. Where the Benthamite

must claim that the behaviour of a man alone on a desert island should never be constrained, the Conservative moralist will — certainly — be impressed by the impracticality of interfering, yet hesitate at the general statement that it could never be desirable that he be constrained. Such a Conservative, persuaded that a solitary man was beating — not his wife — but himself, to his own ruin, would at least ask himself whether there was any way of stopping this.

And there is a second reason why the Conservative hesitates at offering primacy to the Harm-to-Others test. The study of sociology (then called common sense) had already established, when Bentham wrote, that no man is an island. It is facile to pretend that private behaviour does not affect others. Nobody thrives alone. Nobody is degraded, alone. If that was true when Bentham wrote, how much more true is it in a welfare state where the taxpayer picks up the pieces and the Chancellor creams the profits? In modern Britain it is not only the case that any man's death diminishes me: any man's hip replacement diminishes me.

My third reason for rejecting harm as the sole criterion will not appeal to every Tory mind. Many Conservatives believe (or claim to) in moral absolutes. What harms, they believe, is a matter of objective fact. Moral corrosion is as much a question of fact as metal corrosion.

But for the rest of us, "harm" is not a morally neutral term. We accept that where the Roman Catholic may believe an abortion has harmed another human, others may believe only one individual — the mother — is involved. The Emperor Justinian believed that homosexuality, by invoking the wrath of the gods, was the cause of earthquakes. We may disagree, but must allow Justinian his own view of the harm such behaviour might cause. Homosexuality, divorce, abortion are all, we moral relativists believe, incapable of being categorised in terms of the harm they may do — unless we have already agreed on the sinfulness of the behaviour concerned.

I hope I have shown why I find the concept of Harm-to-Others problematic for Conservatives — and why it ought to be problematic for any thoughtful person. But I am nagged by the worry, not that the objections I have raised are too weak — but that they are too strong. The authoritarian may justify the criminalisation of any behaviour in others he judges wrong. The sociologist may argue for interference in every detail of the citizen's life for we draw not a breath without depriving another of a milligram of oxygen. And the relativist, deprived of the Harm Test, may cast about for other armour for an individual's freedom of action.

It is absolutes in this sphere which trouble us. We seek a doctrine which teaches that private behaviour is, on the whole, best left unsupervised by the police, unless there are good arguments the other way. The Harm-to-Others test is a mirage. Liberty is either a frozen absolute or, thawed as I have suggested it must be in the modern mind, too fluid to bear much weight. Upon what else, then, might we rest?

I wonder whether Conservatives have given as much thought as we might to the concept of Privacy? It is not an absolute, which you either have or you don't: one has it completely, or lacks it completely. Privacy is like leisure, or domesticity, or work, or music, or solitude, or wine: it is a desideratum for which most of us have some measure of need. Like most desiderata, it conflicts with others, and we decide how much of it we can afford.

Equality, wealth redistribution, public education, food laws, curfews, political correctness, health guidance, family guidance, "human rights" — even "freedom of information" — all, pursued too single-mindedly, can chip away at the privacy of the individual and of the family. Sometimes they should. All the Conservative needs to assert is that privacy is also a human need, and one which modern theories of government have tended to overlook.

I am not using the word privacy just in the narrow sense of secrecy: the locked doors and heavy curtains —

but in the sense of personal autonomy: the self-government of the individual. It is not far from the concept of liberty, but lacks the latter's absolutist ring. It is quite close to the concept of tolerance but — and this is critical — it connotes neither approval nor even acceptance, just a proper sense of what is and what is not our business. The more liberty (or tolerance) the better, the unthinking may assert; but the use of English does not draw us, in the same way, to the slogan "the more privacy the better". We know that criminals, paedophiles and drug peddlers want privacy, too. Privacy is not always a good thing for everyone or in unlimited measure. It is simply a human need to which we, as Tories, can accord rather more weight than do the compulsive improvers of mankind.

In the present debate about press intrusion, privacy is so much more useful a notion than liberty. The debate between those who think that the news media should have absolute liberty to interfere and those who think individuals should have absolute liberty not to be interfered with, is sterile. A Conservative can assert that the individual's privacy matters, and perhaps deserves a little more — but never absolute — protection.

I have just ended a five-year stint on the Broadcasting Standards Commission. You might be startled by how angry people become over intrusion, especially by television, into the privacy of other people, especially ordinary citizens. The public's idea of privacy and personal autonomy is rather sophisticated and surprisingly deeply felt. Politicians perhaps overlook this side of our national character — and bark of liberty, "rights", or "the public interest", subjects on which I sense people are actually more ambivalent.

The Prime Minister may not be an Oliver Cromwell, Mary Tudor, or Maximilien Robespierre, but it is not inconsistent with the odour of sanctity which now emanates from government that fences may be broken and laws trampled upon which we had always believed to be private property. I do not discount Liberty, Rights, or the Public Interest, but these are blunderbusses. Privacy has a quieter sound. After a few more years' noise about New Britain, Tories may find their countrymen ready to be reminded of the value of privacy.

This is an edited version of a speech given to the Conservative Philosophy Group on Wednesday.

Philip Howard



Wordmarks to get the Alpha geeks prairie-dogging

The new words now being considered by the Oxford English Dictionary for inclusion in its third edition are wordmarks for the new age. For words of archaeological as durable as cathedrals, Oxford's latest batch includes "lumpy", "happy-clappy" and "squeezee-oid". If these develop a lingo-life, they will be included. For the OED is in business to describe the language as it is, not to preserve it or pass judgment on it. And the present worlds of the Internet and Clintonesque workspoke are prolific in new vocabulary. You can hear the new language that is coming our way like the rumble of an electronic surge. For example:

Rebranding: If it had been used in English before, this should have meant burning a logo on a cow's bottom for a second time. But it has just become a fashionable activity and word in both marketing and modern politics based on marketing. It denotes the way that British Airways replaced the Union Jack on its tail fins with ethnic spots and stripes. Demos (the think-tank that pronounces its name unetymologically with a short first syllable) has just held a conference on "Rebranding Europe", appropriately in Utopia Village. In practice this meant trotting out Neil Kimock. But there is no suggestion that Neil should be branded with the European ring of stars on the prominent freckled billboard of his forehead.

Blamestorming: This is derived from *blamestorming*, which is itself copied from *blamestorming*, as practised by *blamestorming* and *aviators*. *Blamestorming* means sitting around in a group discussing why a deadline was missed or somebody strayed off message. And who was responsible. It goes with the embarrassing new fashion for public confession and apology for sins. **Beepilepsy:** The brief seizure that workers suffer when their papers go off (or play the *Toradora*'s tune from *Carmen*) especially when in vibrator mode. The symptoms are physical spasms, goofy expressions, stopping speech in mid-sentence, and smiles of pride at being deemed important enough to have been issued with a Millbank beeper by Peter.

Idea hamsters: People who always seem to have their idea generators running. As the hamster scuttles nowhere on its treadmill all through the night, these professional workers are continuous fountains of suggestions, wheezes and arguments, all as purposeful as the busy scuttling of the hamster. **Gleazing:** This verb or gerund no longer has anything to do with windows, except in the context of the Website. **Gleazing** is now American management speak for sleeping with your eyes open. This has become a popular pastime at conferences and early morning meetings where idea hamsters are in full jibber. "Didn't she notice that three-quarters of the hall were gleazing by the second session?" **Ego surfing:** Scanning the Net, databases, newspapers and reference books, looking for references to one's own name. This is the X Generation's replacement for the older vanguard of looking lovingly at one's reflection in the mirror while murmuring to oneself: "Go for it, Big Boy."

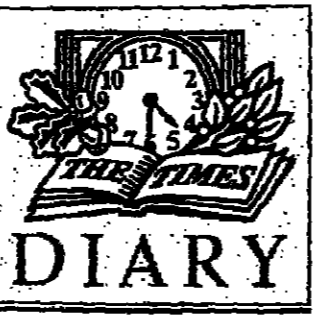
Tourists: Those who take training courses merely to get a paid holiday from their jobs. "We had class, serious students in the Chairman's classroom." An outside management fater or political consultant, brought in to reduce the human resources headcount, so leaving the top brass with clean hands. **Keyboard plaque:** The revolting layers of dirt and crud that build up on a computer keyboard, in my keys consisting of all sand-wich fillings except tuna, but principally cheese and pickle. "Are there any other terminals I can use? This one has a bad case of keyboard plaque." **Cube farm:** An office full of cubicles. This is the latest modification of open plan. **Prairie dogging:** Something loud or interesting happens down on the cube farm. So heads pop up over the walls of their cubicles to see what's going on in the Oval Office. **Alpha geeks:** The most knowledgeable, computer-wise and technically proficient person in an office or work group. "You should ask Philip. He's the alpha geek round here."

Administrative: The stunted, organisational layers beginning just above the rank and file and ruin. Decisions that fall from the administrative are usually profoundly inappropriate or irrelevant to the problems they were originally designed to solve.

Park defence

A PLAN by Mark Fisher, the Culture Minister, to emulate Paris by bringing bold artistic endeavour to London is being secretly fought by the Queen's Royal Parks Agency. The thoughtful Labour toff has been pushing quietly for a large chunk of Hyde Park to be turned into a separate sculpture park. But Mr Fisher has met stiff opposition from the landlord, the Royal Parks Agency, and Dame Jennifer Jenkins, once chairwoman of the National Trust and Roy's mistress. Mr Fisher, who believes the project could be paid for by lottery funds, has mooted the idea in artistic circles and has won support from Julia Peyton-Jones, the smooth director of the Serpentine Gallery. "He thinks it would improve Hyde Park enormously for people walking through," says John Parry, editor of *Sculpture* magazine. "It would be an exciting thing to do and also create work for lots of sculptors."

But Dame Jennifer is a formidable opponent. Her objections derive from heading a group that assessed the activities of the royal parks. One of its views was that there was already "too much clutter". An equally unenthusiastic response has come from the geriatric worthies at the agency. "We have enough sculptures, statues and objects," said an old stick there. "More would not be compatible with the park's rural atmosphere."



see she had to go into the sea in a voluminous bathing costume (she was allowed to wear a wetsuit underneath). To keep her pecker up, she clasped a flask of hot tea to her impressive bosom.

Kick into touch

JUST what we need for a peaceful World Cup. Dr Martens, purveyors of the quintessential "bover boot" favoured by shaven-headed gentlemen. Is to cash in by emblazoning the flag of St George across its steel-capped footwear. "It's a cross idea," says Nigel Evans, MP, who recalls being terrorised on the Swansea terraces by DM-wearing ruffians. "I thought we had stamped this out. It will encourage the wrong sort of fighting spirit back

into the game." The Home Office was in an unusually pookish mood. "It's the person in the boot that can be a problem. I don't suppose they make the boots in different flavours, do they?"

● **BEEF** on the bone is to be cooked on the BBC. The Jack Cunningham-defying stunt is planned by Ross Burden of Ready Steady Cook. "There is nothing wrong with this beef," he said, tucking into an illicit on-the-bone delicacy. "I can cook it on television as long as the beef isn't bought, but donated — and the programme is defined as a private party."

Turf wars

JOHN BIRD, founder of *The Big Issue*, is taking on the mantle of *Citizen Kane*. He is about to trigger a war between homeless magazines on the streets of America. Mr Bird is moving to Los Angeles to prepare for an April launch of an American edition of his paper. The project is backed by Anita Roddick's husband, Gordon, but is causing anxiety among rival publishers who fear Mr Bird will repeat his success there. "Homeless groups can get frightened if you come up with new ideas," he says.

● **A GOOD** hat. Tony Benn. Health freaks at CNN were horrified when Mr Benn lit his famous pipe before a debate. They huffed that proprietor Ted Turner banned such behaviour, so Mr Benn retorted: "If I had known that, I wouldn't have turned up at 7am to perform on your programme." Mr Benn, of course, won.

Back on track

MICHAEL PALIN is a trainpotter. Opening his heart to *The Railway Magazine* he admits to a "sublimated urge to escape from a regime of bourgeois cleanliness to a world of dirt, grime and grease; an identification of engine-drivers as father figures". His enthusiasm has endured. "I gave up my love for trains when I started to go out with girls, but now I would settle down happily with a nice steamer and raise three small shunters."

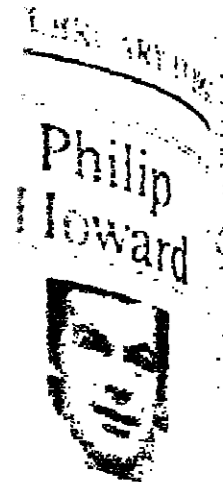
● **LUCK** does not seem to be shining on Caroline Quentin. After separating from comedian Paul Merton last year, the actress, who appears in *Men Behaving Badly* and *Jonathan Creek*, will miss the first week of *The London Cuckolds* at the Royal National Theatre. Quentin was due to play the lead



Bowing out: Caroline Quentin

in the bowdly *Restoration* comedy but has twisted her knee, so is hobbling on crutches. The play stars tonight but the actress will be out for a week. In her place will be Charon Bourke, her understudy and maid in the play, dubbed "Women Behaving Very Badly".

JASPER GERARD



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Moscow's ties to Iraq make it an implausible mediator

William Cohen, the American Defence Secretary, has endured an uncomfortable mission to Moscow.

The existence of even basic agreement on objectives between the United States and Russia is somewhat optimistic.

The documentation discovered by UN inspectors suggests that a decision must have been taken at the highest levels of the Russian Government.

scrutinise and supervise his activities. The central figure in all this is Mr Primakov.

He has ties to Iraq that stretch back decades. He was at the centre of Mikhail Gorbachev's belated efforts to prevent the Gulf War in 1991.

The ties between Moscow and Iraq make the Russians implausible mediators.

As Tony Blair told the Cabinet yesterday, the time for hopeless offers from Iraq has passed.

WORKING FOR CREDIT

Welfare reform and independent taxation are still at odds

The road to comprehensive welfare reform was never destined to be easy.

There is also a wider cause for concern. As Ms Primarolo argued, the whole purpose of the working families tax credit is to provide a "clear link with employment".

There are advantages in this approach but also real difficulties. The independent taxation of women is not exclusively an issue of equality.

A PRAYER TO ST VALENTINE

Give thanks for the day which allows the manly to melt

Even sleeping heads which lie, human, on faithless arms tonight will wake tomorrow to cards, flowers and caresses.

Those free spirits who rail against the artificiality of one day set aside for romance, and yearn for a life lived at passion's peak.

The rituals of the day have, like those of every festival, been woven into new shapes.

the incomplete take-up of family credit. It would be better to avoid a similar problem with the working families tax credit.

The fundamental factor is that at present UK competition law offers only weak controls on anti-competitive behaviour.

That the Government is prepared to tackle this and to offer, for the first time, the prospect of real redress against those acting in an anti-competitive manner should be welcomed.

Yours faithfully, DAVID STRANG, Barlow Lyde & Gilbert (solicitors), Beaufort House, 15 St Botolph Street, EC3A 7NU. dstrang@blg.co.uk February 10.

Competition key to economic health

From Mr Colin Baillieu and others

Sir, There is a new Competition Bill about to go to the House of Commons (reports, February 12).

In 1948 Harold Wilson made "the public interest" the cornerstone of competition policy.

The conditions of competition vary enormously from case to case and from industry to industry.

Each of us has served on the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the past decade and between us have sat on well over a hundred cases.

Yours faithfully, COLIN BAILLIEU, PATRICIA MANN, STANLEY METCALFE, PATRICK MINFORD, CYRIL UNWIN, c/o European Business School, Regents Park, NW1 4NS, February 12.

From Mr David Strang

Sir, It is a shame that in his broadside against the Competition Bill, John Redwood seems unable to see the merits of the Government's proposal.

The fundamental factor is that at present UK competition law offers only weak controls on anti-competitive behaviour.

That the Government is prepared to tackle this and to offer, for the first time, the prospect of real redress against those acting in an anti-competitive manner should be welcomed.

Yours faithfully, DAVID STRANG, Barlow Lyde & Gilbert (solicitors), Beaufort House, 15 St Botolph Street, EC3A 7NU. dstrang@blg.co.uk February 10.

Disaster relief

From Air Marshal Sir John Curtiss, Chief Executive of The Association of Pathfinders

Sir, Three of our Pathfinder teams have so far failed to get into the devastated earthquake area in northern Afghanistan.

It seems plain to us that the only way of quickly supplying the beleaguered survivors is by air-dropping food, blankets and tents.

We have a further arm to the Pathfinders, called "Snowdrop", which has refined a system for dropping food and other supplies by air.

The weather problem inherent in such an air drop as we are proposing could be overcome by dropping a radar beacon using the Global Positioning System, which is highly accurate.

I fear that we are very slow in harnessing the latest technology to disaster relief.

Yours sincerely, JOHN CURTISS, Chief Executive, The Association of Pathfinders, Headquarters Pathfinders, Swire House, 59 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6AJ, February 12.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Relevance of traditional language in the Lord's Prayer

From the Bishop of Maidstone

Sir, If, as you report (February 12), "traditionalists" are horrified by the General Synod decision to print the international, modern-English version of the Lord's Prayer alongside the more generally used modified traditional version in the proposed new Common Worship, then they have surprisingly short memories.

The decision made this week (which is not final) was far more conservative and less totalitarian than that made when Synod approved of the Alternative Services Book in 1980.

In the Church of England, liturgy is always seen as having an educational role. What is now proposed, through the new book, is that Anglican worshippers should learn the traditional version (with tiny and widely accepted modifications) — eg "who" instead of "which", which is the best known version in the British Isles.

The decision raises the question of whether we would all be better off if there was only one version in use throughout the country.

Prostate tests

From the President of The British Association of Urological Surgeons

Sir, Whether one regards the PSA (prostate specific antigen) test as a "Provisionally Sent Assay" or simply one that "Provokes Stress and Anxiety" depends upon one's point of view, as evidenced by the comments of my esteemed retired colleague, Mr Joseph C. Smith (letter, February 6), who prefers to savour his red wine in blissful ignorance.

The facts are: 1. 12,000 men in the UK die from prostate cancer each year; the number is increasing and is set to double within 20 years.

Diplomats' school fees

From Lady Fenn

Sir, In the bad old days it was mandatory for a diplomat to have a private income of at least £6,000 a year (report, "Diplomats may lose school fee payments", February 6, later editions).

When our eldest child was eight he had been to school in three different continents: three different systems, three different sets of teachers and friends. He had to move again and we decided that the boarding option had to be tried. We resolved that if this did

with the education authorities in particular. RE lessons are more influential than Sunday schools, so the key to the matter is not what is said in church but what is taught in school.

Yours etc, GAVIN MAIDSTONE, Bishop's House, Pen Lane, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN21 0DL, February 12.

From Mr Robin Fursdon

Sir, I read with interest the intention of the Bishop of Norwich, the Right Reverend Peter Nott, and others to do their utmost to persuade the Church to cling to the Tyndale wording of the Lord's Prayer (report, February 6).

One problem lies not so much with the substitution of "time of trial" for "temptation", but the concept of asking the Lord to "lead us" into neither. There is room for the foreknowledge of God in our lives, but surely not for the idea that he puts temptation in our way to see how we cope, perhaps without his support or without any faith.

Another problem with clinging to the familiar language is that we cannot be sure that schools still teach it by rote: if only about 14 per cent of children now attend Sunday school or other church-related activities (report, January 10; letters, January 20), where will they learn it? Large numbers of people are now separated by two generations from any home faith.

Yours sincerely, R. FURSDON, The Old Manse, Barmoor, Rynon, Tyne and Wear NE40 3BD, February 6.

From Miss Marjorie Leale

Sir, It has always seemed incredible to me that anyone could imagine that God would ever want us, or encourage us, to fall into temptation — and surely the expression "not into" means "out of" or "away from".

Temptation is understood by all: so would not the phrase "And lead us away from temptation", be a solution for the many who are trying to bring the Lord's Prayer into a more acceptable modern form?

Yours faithfully, MARJORIE LEALE, St Raphael's Residential Home, 32 Orchard Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 2PS, February 7.

From Mr Ian Curteis

Sir, I rather thought the Lord's Prayer was what Our Lord said, filtered by translation into the noblest and most memorable English, rather than what He should have said if only He'd had the intelligence to sit on the General Synod.

Yours truly, IAN CURTEIS, The Manor House, Somerford Keynes, Gloucestershire GL7 6DL, February 12.

From Mr Stuart Weir

Sir, With respect to the Chairman of the Prayer Book Society (report, February 12), if I were doing a parachute jump and my strap broke, my prayer would be more of the "Lord save me!" variety.

Yours etc, J. STUART WEIR, 19 The Gables, Curmorr, Oxford OX2 9QA, stuart@christiansinsport.org.uk February 12.

Brecht's 'War Primer'

From Dr Tom Kuhn

Sir, Daniel Johnson ("Give peace a chance", Books, February 5) has an odd view of *War Primer*, the newly published English version of Bertolt Brecht's verses from the Second World War.

The collection is notable, above all, for the sympathy Brecht expresses for the victims of war, on every possible side. He may have been sceptical of the leaders, but he was in no way cynical about their poor followers.

Brecht's practice of literary "team-work" does not imply that he did not write his own words, and in any case the poems of the *War Primer* have never been in question in this respect. Johnson mentions two putative authors. One of them, Margarete Steffin, died in 1941. Before most of these poems were thought of. The other, Ruth Berlau, may well have turned up some of the photos and she certainly edited the work for publication: but — as her own preface and her text on the dustjacket of the old German edition make very clear — she did nothing else.

Yours faithfully, TOM KUHN (Fellow and Tutor), St Hugh's College, Oxford OX2 6LE, February 6.

Immortals in the field

From Mr J. E. F. Clarke

Sir, Philip Howard's column (January 30; letters, February 9) of a famous deceased philosopher's possible cricket XI raises the question (given the self-willed and egotistic amongst them) of suitable umpires. Suggestions: Buddha — unmoved by human vanities and self-interest — and, of course, Solomon.

Yours faithfully, JAMES CLARKE, 18 Oakbank, Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QY, February 9.

Value for money?

From Mrs P. A. Buxton

Sir, As a staff nurse of 40 years experience and earning almost £10,000 a year less than the Liverpool street cleaner in your report (February 7), please may I head the stamper of my colleagues in asking for consideration for the next vacancy?

Yours faithfully, ANN BUXTON, 8 Gosling Grove, Downley, High Wycombe, HP13 5UF, pabuxton@hotmail.com February 10.

An extra tincture

From Vice-Admiral Sir John Webster

Sir, Some advice to the Prince of Wales, whose paint dried too quickly in the sun and dry air of Bhutan (report, earlier editions, February 12), is contained in a former Admiralty manual of hydrographic surveying. It instructed surveyors trying to lay colour washes on their fair charts in dry conditions to "add a little gin to the water".

Yours faithfully, JOHN WEBSTER, Old School House, Soberton, Hampshire SO32 3PF, February 12.

malignant than in benign disease. Thus, one or more PSA observations can alert suspicion at a time when a cancer is still potentially curable. Biopsy is used to confirm the diagnosis. 4. It is still only five years since PSA testing was introduced in this country. It is therefore too soon for ongoing studies to have proved beyond doubt that early diagnosis will have a favourable impact in the long term. But this is no reason to avoid its use now.

Until hard evidence is available, it would be sensible to keep an open mind on this question. In the meantime, I shall continue to have my PSA level checked regularly.

Yours etc, BILL HENDRY, President, The British Association of Urological Surgeons, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PN, February 8.

not work for him, my husband would try to find another job.

Happily, all three of our "deprived kids", as a qualified child-carer seriously called them, enjoyed their schools and my husband was able to serve the Government for another 27 years in Asia, Africa, America and Europe. I have no doubt that if today's diplomats had no help (full fees are rarely paid and extras can be quite crippling on a civil servant's pay) there would be a massive exodus of diplomats as soon as their families reached school age.

And why should rank be a factor in deciding entitlement? The "junior official" has his family life disrupted just as much as his ambassadors.

Yours sincerely, SUSAN C. FENN, Applecroft, Chainhurst, Marden, Kent TN12 9SS, February 6.

Millennium bug

From Mr E. F. McWilliam

Sir, I recently set the clock on my video recorder to 2330 hrs, December 31, 1999, then programmed it to start recording at 0030 hrs on January 1, 2000 (or 00).

The video recorded, as programmed, without protest. This may have been too simple a test of the so-called millennium bug. However, I am surprised that I have never seen any mention of a similar experiment carried out on other time-sensitive equipment.

Yours sincerely, E. F. McWILLIAM, 21 Redland Road, Bristol BS6 6YT.

From Mr Bernard Kay

Sir, If the internal clock on a computer system is not corrected before the end of December 1999, the year should then be reset to 1971. When this changes to 1972, it will be starting a leap year which begins on a Saturday, as will the year 2000.

Until a final correction is made, the year — but not the day or date — will have to be altered manually in cases where it is registered automatically on the screen.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully, BERNARD KAY, 244 Roundwood Road, NW10 3UG.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE February 12: The Governor-General of Papua New Guinea (His Excellency Mr Silas Atopare) was received in audience by Her Majesty the Queen...

Credence as Ambassador from Japan to the Court of St James's. Mrs Hayashi was also received by Her Majesty. Sir John Kerr (Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) was present...

Buckingham Palace luncheon The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh held a luncheon party yesterday at Buckingham Palace.

Receptions Lord Richard, QC Lord Privy Seal, was the host at a reception held last night at the House of Lords on behalf of Mr Richard Hardman, President of the Geological Society.

Supper Lord Mayor of Westminster The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Westminster were the hosts at a supper party held last night in the Bechstein Room at Wigmore Hall after a civic concert in the hall.

Saddlers' Company Mr Edward Pearson, Master of the Saddlers' Company, presented prizes to the winners in the Society of Master Saddlers annual saddlery competition at a reception held last night at Saddlers' Hall.

Birthdays today Mr Michael Attenborough, principal associate director, Royal Shakespeare Company, 48; Dr D.V. Atterton, chairman, Guinness Mahon Holdings, 71; Mr David Banks, Consultant Editor, Sunday Mirror, 50; Miss Caroline Blakiston, actress, 65; Mr Liam Brady, former football manager, 42; Professor Derek Burke, former Vice-Chancellor, University of East Anglia, 68; Dr J.P. Clayton, former Apothecary to HM Household at Windsor, 77; Miss M.E. Collins, former matron-in-chief, QARNNS, 71; Mr Gareth Davies, chairman, Glynwed International, 68; Rear-Admiral J. Phillip Edwards, Emeritus Fellow and Development Director, Wadhwan Coll...

Consular Corps of London Lord Clinton-Davis, Minister for Trade, was the guest of honour at a luncheon of the Consular Corps of London held yesterday at the Hyatt Carlton Tower hotel. Mr Lawrence Landau, president, was the host. Member of the Diplomatic Corps were present.

Memorial services Brigadier Angus Irwin A service of thanksgiving for the life of Brigadier Angus Irwin was held yesterday at St John's Episcopal Church, Perth. Canon Robert Fyffe officiated, assisted by the Rev Hugh Lee and the Rev Tom Nichol.

Mr David Harris A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr David Harris, former Chairman and Chief Executive of Nestlé UK Ltd, will be held at Croxford Parish Church on Thursday, March 12, at 3pm.

Memorial services

Miss Caroline Irwin, daughter, and Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle read the lessons and Miss Mary-Rose Irwin, granddaughter, read from the works of Minnie Louise Haskins. Major-General Alistair Irwin, son, and Colonel Ian Critchley gave addresses.



A cymbidium orchid, one of the most popular varieties to be featured at Kew Orchid Festival which opens at the Royal Botanic Gardens tomorrow and continues until March 29. Alan Toogood's report on the festival will appear tomorrow.

Mr David Harris

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Mr David Harris, former Chairman and Chief Executive of Nestlé UK Ltd, will be held at Croxford Parish Church on Thursday, March 12, at 3pm.

Luncheons

Newspaper Society Lord Wakeham, Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, was the guest of honour at a luncheon of the Newspaper Society held yesterday at Bloomsbury House.

Regiment will salute Enoch Powell

Enoch Powell will be honoured by comrades from The Royal Warwickshire Regiment at a funeral service to be held at the regimental church next Wednesday.

Anniversaries today

BIRTHS: John Hunter, physiologist and surgeon, East Kilbride, 1728; David Allan, painter, Alloa, 1744; Lord Randolph Churchill, statesman, Bleheim Palace, 1849; Feodor Chaliapin, singer and actor, Kazan, Russia, 1873; Eleanor Parjeon, writer of children's verse and stories, London, 1881; Georges Simenon, writer and creator of Maigret, Liège, 1901.

University news

Bristol The following are to receive Honorary Degrees at a Congregation to be held next Wednesday: Mr Keith Chates, patron of the university's Campaign for Re-sources; managing director and deputy chairman of Marks & Spencer - Doctor of Laws

Dinners

Gardeners' Company The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, accompanied by the Sheriffs and their ladies, attended a livery and ladies dinner of the Gardeners' Company held last night at the Mansion House.

Forthcoming marriages

Sir Geoffrey Dear and Mrs A.M. Jones The engagement is announced between Sir Geoffrey Dear, of Droitwich, Worcestershire, and Mrs Alison Martin Jones, of Pimlico, London.

Latest wills

Sir Anthony Dawson, Physician to the Queen 1982-93, of Calworth, Banbury, Oxfordshire, left estate valued at £170,805 net.

Personal Column

PERSONAL COLUMN TRADE: 0171 481 1982 FAX: 0171 481 9313

BMDS: 0171 680 6880 PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Table with columns for BIRTHS, DEATHS, and SERVICES. Includes entries for Chamberlain, Cornwell, Durazzano, Emerson, Goodham, Mowley, Purvis, Rosser-Lamb, Stanton, Stollen, Sutcliffe, Swaffield, Thellusson, and Walker.

Table with columns for DEATHS and SERVICES. Includes entries for Bartlett, Chastres, Laffie, Maclean, McManis, O'Sullivan, and Walker.

Table with columns for DEATHS and SERVICES. Includes entries for Laffie, Maclean, McManis, O'Sullivan, and Walker.

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Table with columns for DEATHS and SERVICES. Includes entries for Maclean, McManis, O'Sullivan, and Walker.

Advertisement for Personal Column, featuring 'PERSONAL COLUMN' and 'TRADE: 0171 481 1982 FAX: 0171 481 9313'.

Advertisement for Imperial College, featuring 'Imperial College RESEARCH FUND' and 'PROSTATE CANCER RESEARCH FUND'.

THE TIMES

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Give British films the full funding monty
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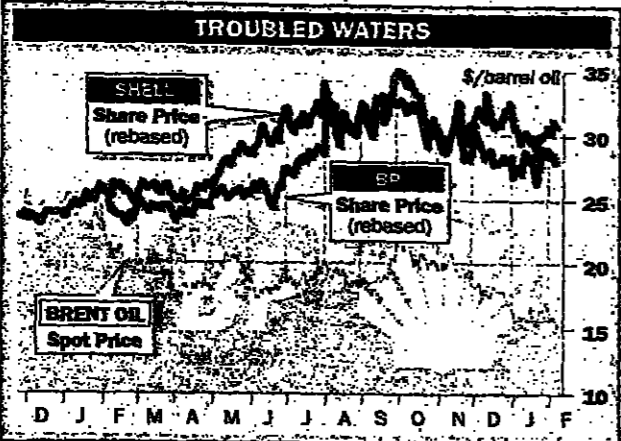
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BUSINESS EDITOR: Patience Wheatcroft

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13 1998

Fall in oil prices may restrict Shell exploration

By CARL MORTSHED, INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS EDITOR



SHELL, the world's largest oil company, may cut back on its massive exploration and production budget as a result of the dramatic fall in oil prices. Mark Moody-Stuart, chairman of the multinational's UK parent company, admitted yesterday that Shell would struggle to achieve its target rate of return this year because of a \$5 (£2.90) drop in the oil price.

Shell's fourth-quarter net profits fell almost a third, the company announced yesterday, and the rate of return on

capital had slipped from 11.9 per cent to 11.6 per cent. Mr Moody-Stuart said the company would not give up on its goal of a 15 per cent return on capital by 2001 but he said the current year target of 13 per cent "will be tough with oil prices as they are".

Shell's target rate is based on the assumption of an \$18 oil price compared with today's price of about \$15 a barrel. A \$1 movement in the oil price costs Shell \$400 million.

Shell is currently re-examining its upstream projects in

light of the changed environment. Oil production was up only 1 per cent on the year, 4 per cent below forecast.

The warning came as the oil company announced a slide in net profits for the final quarter of 1997 from £1.4 billion to £982 million. After stripping one stockholding gains and losses, Shell's profits were down 21 per cent in the final quarter and down 6 per cent for the year at £4.9 billion.

Oil prices cost the company some \$450 million during the fourth quarter, while the

Asian financial turmoil hit Shell's marketing operations with a \$170 million impact. Currency losses amounted to \$130 million in the period.

Shell's upstream profits were down 27 per cent to £718 million in the fourth quarter and fell 8 per cent to £2.9 billion for the year. Gas production suffered from the warm weather and oil output was affected by community disturbances and funding shortfalls in Nigeria, the slow start to Foinaven in the North Sea and disappointing production

from Shell Oil, the US subsidiary. Shell's downstream chemical and refining businesses fell short of targets. Mr Moody-Stuart said that Shell had far to go with chemicals which showed a 14 per cent gain in the fourth quarter.

Refining and marketing profits were up 1 per cent. Shell is paying an 8p final dividend to Shell Transport shareholders, up from 7.5p, making £3.1p (12.3p) for the year. The shares fell 12.5p to 40 1/2 p.

Tempus, page 30

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

| | | |
|----------------|----------|----------|
| FTSE 100 | 6552.5 | (-55.4) |
| Yield | 2.91% | |
| FTSE All share | 2594.61 | (-20.34) |
| Nikkei | 17174.93 | (-30.16) |
| New York | | |
| Dow Jones | 8254.76 | (-59.79) |
| S&P Composite | 1010.73 | (-9.28) |

US RATE

| | | |
|---------------|---------|-----------|
| Federal Funds | 5 1/4% | (5 1/4%) |
| Long Bond | 10 1/4% | (10 1/4%) |
| Yield | 5.53% | (6.85%) |

LONDON MONEY

| | | |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| 3-mth Interbank | 7 1/4% | (7 1/4%) |
| Life long gilt | 12 1/4% | (12 1/4%) |

STERLING

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| New York | 1.6383* | (1.6325) |
| London | | |
| \$ | 1.6389 | (1.6327) |
| DM | 2.9674 | (2.9723) |
| Sfr | 3.9455 | (3.9355) |
| Sfr | 2.3813 | (2.3917) |
| Yen | 202.69 | (201.81) |
| £ index | 104.3 | (104.4) |

DOLLAR

| | | |
|----------|---------|----------|
| London | | |
| DM | 1.8095* | (1.8185) |
| Sfr | 4.0625* | (4.0650) |
| Sfr | 1.4507* | (1.4525) |
| Yen | 123.92* | (123.57) |
| \$ index | 107.9 | (108.1) |

Tokyo close Yen 122.96

NORTH SEA OIL

| | | |
|--------------------|---------|-----------|
| Brent 15-day (Apr) | \$14.90 | (\$15.05) |
|--------------------|---------|-----------|

GOLD

| | | |
|--------------|----------|------------|
| London close | \$298.45 | (\$299.85) |
|--------------|----------|------------|

* denotes midday trading price

Vallance goes to part-time role at BT

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

SIR Iain Vallance, announced yesterday he was stepping down as full-time chairman of BT and would take on a part-time role from the end of July.

The news came as BT announced a pre-tax profit of just over £1 billion for the third quarter — a figure that was flat compared with last year after a £238 million fee associated with the MCI merger break-up was discounted.

Sir Peter Bonfield, chief executive, said yesterday: "Part-time is in the eye of the beholder. Our relationship will continue the same. It will be pretty much business as usual."

Sir Iain, 55, who earns about £500,000 a year is expected to spend up to three days a week

with BT. He started his career in the General Post Office in 1966 and joined the BT board in 1981. He became chief executive in 1986 and executive chairman in 1987.

Sir Peter confirmed yesterday that BT was talking to "everybody you would expect us to talk to" to try to replace the hole in its American strategy caused by the planned WorldCom merger with MCI. He emphasised that things were still at "the evaluation stage". Until the WorldCom-MCI deal is complete, BT cannot enter another merger in the US.

BT is seeking better American distribution for Concert, its advanced services operation for multi-national corporations. It is also considering

whether or not to invest directly in the US. The two could come together in the shape of a single deal with one company.

In the UK, BT has managed to maintain call volume in spite of intensifying competition. Cable companies were installing 50,000 telephone lines a month, yet BT said it had managed to maintain its overall exchange lines year-on-year through market growth and the increase in second lines.

BT's international call volume had grown in volume by 8 per cent year-on-year, but because of price-cutting revenues in the quarter had fallen 15.3 per cent to £383 million.

The burden of substantial investment means BT faces a flat year or so in terms of profit because it will invest "several hundred million" a year for the next three expanding its interests in continental Europe.

Sir Peter also made it clear that BT's ambitions to compete against cable and satellite in the entertainment market had changed because the technology had changed.

"We are not going to be squirting the BBC down telephone lines," Sir Peter said. Instead, BT would concentrate on providing interactive services through its stake in British Interactive Broadcasting, still awaiting regulatory clearance, and in delivering fast Internet services to PCs, including video clips.

BT's third-quarter pre-tax profit of £1.019 billion, including the MCI payment, represented a 12.1 per cent increase on the £909 million figure in the same quarter last year. Turnover of £3,939 billion, compared with £3,763 billion. Reported earnings rose from 9.4p a share to 11.2p, but actually fell to 8.3p before exceptional items.

BT shares rose 4 1/2 p to 57 1/2 yesterday.

Commentary, page 29



Lord Hollick, left, and David Arculus, who is resigning from his United News & Media post after less than a year

Now Arculus goes from United News

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

UNITED NEWS & MEDIA, publisher of *The Express*, is losing its second top executive in a matter of weeks.

David Arculus, chief operating officer and second in command to Lord Hollick, the chief executive, is to leave after less than a year in the job. Mr Arculus was recruited from Emap, the magazine, radio and exhibitions group, of which he had been managing director.

United's shares fell 26p, to 692p, on the announcement yesterday of Mr Arculus's departure. They have fallen from a high of 804p in October.

It is clear that Mr Arculus had not been happy at United and it is believed that he is close to announcing a new senior position. He has given notice under his contract,

which expires in April 1999. United insists that Stephen Grabiner, who is the director in charge of its national and regional newspaper business and who has another job lined up, will not leave until January 1999 when his contract runs out. Mr Grabiner has been appointed chief executive of British Digital Broadcasting, the digital terrestrial television service due to start later this year.

Mr Arculus was unavailable for comment yesterday, but the fact that Lord Hollick is known to be a very hands-on chief executive and that Mr Arculus did not have responsibility for running any of the United companies was probably a factor in his going.

Commentary, page 29

CMC ruling costs Cityscape \$185m

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE Office of Fair Trading has dealt a severe blow to City Mortgage Corporation, the controversial lender, by forcing the company to abandon punitive terms on all its loans.

As a result, Cityscape Financial Corporation, CMC's American parent, will write off \$185 million (about £113 million) saying action by the OFT had had a "material adverse effect" on the company's financial condition.

CMC's use of excessive redemption penalties and high interest rates have been severely criticised by politicians and consumer groups. Last August, after the OFT issued strict guidelines to "non-status" lenders, it stopped including onerous terms such as "rule 78" and dual interest

rates on new loans. It has now agreed to backdate the ban to May 1995, when it launched, at huge cost.

CMC's 38,000 borrowers will now pay a maximum early redemption penalty of six months in the first three years of a loan, falling to zero after eight years. Its "standard" interest rate will be cut from 18 to 12.4 per cent, reducing the monthly payment on a £25,000 25-year loan by £117 to £341. It also faces a wave of litigation from borrowers under the 1995 Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Act.

Job losses at CMC's Watford base and in the US could follow. Cityscape could also be delisted from Nasdaq as its share price has drifted below \$1 for three months.

HMSO sale costs taxpayer £75m

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE sale of Her Majesty's Stationery Office has cost the taxpayer at least £75 million, the National Audit Office says today. Proceeds of the £54 million sale to the National Publishing Group were wiped out to clear HMSO debts.

Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor-General, says that the company had debts of £50 million and had reached its borrowing limit. Its finances were so precarious that in the final days before completion of the sale, HMSO had to cease normal trading and suspend payments to suppliers.

The severity of HMSO's financial problems prompted NPG, now operating as The Stationery Office, to cut its bid from £69 million to £54 million. The Cabinet Office ended up paying

NPG, a consortium headed by Rupert Pennant-Rea, former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, £38 million to cover debts accrued while trading was suspended.

The Cabinet Office also paid £11 million in redundancies, £1.88 million in privatisation fees and £5.5 million to settle other liabilities left by HMSO.

The new owner said a provision of £65.1 million had been made against restructuring. Staff had been cut from 2,500 to 1,500. In the first half of 1997, the business made operating profit of £10 million, against a loss of £50 million for January 1995 to September 1996.

The Stationery Office last night said that the NAO report confirmed that, in state ownership, HMSO was badly run.

Commentary, page 29

Merrill Lynch to open brokerage in Japan

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

MERRILL LYNCH is setting up a retail brokerage in Japan, betting that the Japanese economy is set to recover.

The US investment bank will hire 2,000 brokers, mostly from failed Yamaichi Securities, to staff its initial 30 branch offices.

Herbert Allison, Merrill president, said: "The announcement today is a ringing note of confidence in the Japanese economy and the Japanese market. Let there be no mistake, Merrill Lynch is bullish on Japan."

The move will fuel competition ahead of the April Fool's Day "Big Bang" financial deregulation in Japan, a highly lucrative market with an estimated £6 trillion in individual savings. An ING Baring analyst said:

"The timing and nature of the purchase are shrewd."

The move, yet to be approved by Japan's Finance Ministry, will triple the size of Merrill's Japanese operations. The brokerage will be capitalised at between \$200 million and \$300 million and could be profitable in three years. Until now Merrill, which accounts for about 9 per cent of trading on the New York Stock Exchange, has been investing heavily in Europe, particularly in Britain where it has purchased Smith New Court and Mercury Asset Management.

Retail investment in Japan has long been the domain of the country's Big Four brokerages, leaving foreign brokers to concentrate on institutional clients. Currently the biggest foreign retail brokerage in Japan is Citibank with 21 branch offices.

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The Royal Bank of Scotland

صكذانا الاجل

Northern Rock cuts loan rate

Northern Rock has cut its standard home loan rate for new borrowers. The group has reduced the standard rate by 0.2 per cent to 8.5 per cent for new borrowers immediately, and from April 1 for existing borrowers, provided base rates do not go up next month.

Adam Applegarth, Northern Rock executive director, said that the boost to borrowers was timed to coincide with the traditional peak period for housing transactions. The Halifax, the UK's biggest mortgage provider, and the Nationwide Building Society said they had no plans to change their home loan rates.

Talks off

Enviromed, the medical products and supplies group, said the potential bidder for the company had abandoned talks and that no other discussions were being held. Enviromed said it was not aware of any other party contemplating an offer.

Kodak buy

Eastman Kodak is to buy 51 per cent of PictureVision Inc, America's leading provider of digital imaging services that allow photos to be stored and sent over the Internet.

Philips beats analysts' forecasts with £1.7bn

By KATHY LIPARI

PHILIPS, the Dutch electronics group, reported an impressive leap in total net profits to a record 5.73 billion guilders (£1.7 billion) in 1997 and predicted a better year ahead, with expectations of double-digit earnings growth.

The company also unveiled an aggressive corporate strategy for the coming year, with plans to invest an extra 1 billion guilders on boosting its market presence and a possible share buyback.

The 1997 result, which was better than analysts' forecasts, represented a strong rebound from the annual net losses of 590 million guilders a year ago. Earnings in 1996 were crippled by extraordinary losses of 1.3 billion guilders, mainly associated with Grundig, Philips's loss-making German partner, which has since been sold.

Extraordinary items in 1997 totalled gains of 2.4 billion guilders, including the sales of the Philips stakes in TSMC and United & Philips Communications.

Cor Boonstra, president and chief executive, said: "Most product divisions are showing

strong operating performance. As a result, we expect to show improved earnings for 1998."

However, Mr Boonstra warned the market that the first half may be difficult. "We are cautious for the first half of the year, in particular the first quarter, as markets in Asia and Brazil could show further weakness and we expect to incur losses in our consumer communications business."

Sales for the year jumped 10 per cent to 76.5 billion guilders, while net profit from normal operations jumped above expectations of about 3 billion guilders to 3.3 billion guilders from 723 million guilders.

The company also suggested a possible share buyback if Dutch tax laws are reformed, as expected, later this year.

Philips shareholders will receive a 25 per cent higher dividend of 2 guilders per share.

Philips also appointed Roel Pieper, a former senior vice-president at Compaq Corp and touted as a possible successor to Mr Boonstra, to the Philips management board.



Open day: Terry Wardle, director of operations, is pictured at the opening of the first Argos store in Amsterdam yesterday. Argos will open five shops in The Netherlands, costing £13 million. The move is the first by Stuart Rose, the new chief executive, who joined three days ago to defend the company against a hostile £1.6 billion bid by GUS

Broadbent takes fifth post

By FRASER NELSON

ADAM BROADBENT, the former Schroders director, is to replace Sir John Hoskyns as non-executive chairman of Arcadia — marking his fifth City directorship since stepping down from the merchant bank 14 months ago.

Mr Broadbent, who established a reputation as one of the City's most active dealmakers during his 28 years with Schroders, will work two days a month at Arcadia. His predecessor enjoyed an annual salary of

£225,000. In addition to income from his other directorships, Mr Broadbent's remuneration is likely to restore his annual income to over £300,000. This is still a fraction of the £1 million a year he enjoyed at Schroders.

Arcadia is likely to be the most demanding of his five jobs. Just after leaving Schroders in 1996, where he was head of investment banking in New York, he was named chairman of Dover Harbour Board. In March last

year he became non-executive chairman of Carclo Engineering, and three months ago he was named a non-executive director of EMAP, the publishing concern. He is also on the board of REL Consulting.

He is to join the Arcadia board immediately and take over as chairman when Sir John retires at the end of July. Arcadia shares rose 5p to 475p yesterday. The company was formed in January when Burton Group demerged its Debenham subsidiary.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Frustrated Lonrho may halt JCI talks

LONRHO may abandon its attempts to strike a deal with JCI, the South African mining group, which would include buying back 26 per cent of Lonrho's shares for £220 million, because of difficulties negotiating with JCI. The British conglomerate has been in talks with JCI for more than six months and in addition to buying the 26 per cent was hoping to purchase JCI's Tavistock coal mining business. However, the board of JCI, which has told investors that it would break the 100 year old company up, has been split over its strategy and Lonrho has refused to link the deal to buy back the 26 per cent stake with the Tavistock transaction.

Yesterday Lonrho said it is pressing on with the £250 million demerger of its non-mining interests in Africa. A prospectus for Lonrho Africa — which has hotel, motor and trading operations in 12 African countries — is due to be published next month. The business made operating profits of £42 million on a turnover of £555 million last year and will have debts of around £60 million. Lonrho is also attempting to sell its Princess Hotels chain for around £300 million after a deal with Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the Saudi investor. A sale memorandum has been sent to interested parties.

NatWest's German cut

NATWEST MARKETS is to close its Frankfurt operation with the loss of 38 jobs. The investment bank said that it would continue to serve German clients from London after the business is wound up at the end of the third quarter. NatWest Group will retain a Frankfurt presence through its Global Financial Markets division. The closure is part of a continuing restructuring of NatWest's investment banking operations, a process that has already seen the sale of large swathes of NatWest Markets.

Tepnel deeper in red

TEPNEL LIFE SCIENCES, the biotechnology group, incurred a loss of £1.24 million in the six months to December 31, up from a loss of £650,000, after stepping up its research and development programme 71 per cent to £1.03 million. The group said the loss was in line with its budget. Turnover fell to £96,000 from £134,000. Losses per share increased from 1.3p to 2.5p. There is again no dividend. The company said that it was well advanced in negotiations with European distributors to market Daras, its DNA analysis instrument.

Celsis issues warning

SHARES in Celsis International, the contamination testing company, collapsed from 70p to a new low of 51p yesterday when the company warned the market that its first profits will fail to meet analysts' forecasts of £1-£3 million. Celsis, which floated at 100p nearly five years ago, blamed currency factors and the downturn in Asian markets. The distribution deal with Becton Dickinson, which was hailed as a breakthrough, has also hit sales of its SystemSure device, at least in the short term. *Tempus, page 30*

Bourse may be floated

DEUTSCHE BOURSE, which owns the Frankfurt stock exchange and the DTB derivatives exchange, may seek a share listing. Rolf Breuer, the Deutsche Bank chairman and a member of the board, said that the exchange would start discussing the matter within six weeks. He said that Frankfurt stood a good chance of being the premier financial centre in continental Europe, but would never challenge London as the European time zone's main financial centre.

TOURIST RATES

| | Bank Buys | Bank Sells |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Australia \$ | 2.51 | 2.33 |
| Austria Sch | 2.97 | 28.25 |
| Belgium Fr | 54.50 | 59.54 |
| Canada \$ | 2.49 | 2.29 |
| Cyprus Cyp | 0.916 | 0.843 |
| Denmark Kr | 11.91 | 11.02 |
| Finland Mk | 8.56 | 8.81 |
| France Fr | 10.42 | 9.84 |
| Germany DM | 3.14 | 2.89 |
| Greece Dr | 485 | 457 |
| Hong Kong \$ | 13.53 | 12.53 |
| Iceland Kr | 130 | 110 |
| India Ru | 1.24 | 1.11 |
| Ireland Sp | 5.29 | 5.64 |
| Italy Lit | 3108 | 2871 |
| Japan Yen | 216.93 | 199.40 |
| Malta | 0.883 | 0.824 |
| Netherlands Gld | 3.540 | 3.245 |
| New Zealand \$ | 2.28 | 2.71 |
| Norway Kr | 12.98 | 12.02 |
| Portugal Esc | 318.53 | 294.50 |
| S Africa Rd | 4.80 | 7.58 |
| Spain Ptas | 263.29 | 244.50 |
| Sweden Kr | 14.07 | 12.97 |
| Switzerland Fr | 2.54 | 2.32 |
| Turkey Lira | 373.524 | 353.846 |
| USA \$ | 1.747 | 1.604 |

Notes: For small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Virgin to strengthen cola

By DOMINIC WALSH

RICHARD BRANSON is to step up plans to develop Virgin Cola into a global rival to Coca-Cola and Pepsi after buying out his joint venture partner in the brand.

Cott, a Canadian company that specialises in own-brand products, has sold its 50 per cent stake for a sum believed to be less than £10 million, although it will continue to manufacture and package the beverage from its UK plants.

Nick Kirkbride, managing director of the Virgin Cola Company, denied suggestions that Cott was pulling out because of declining sales of the four-year-old brand. "The

point of doing this deal is to put Virgin in a position to develop the brand internationally in the way we want, whereas we were tied up with Cott who had a different agenda," he said.

He claimed that the brand had lifted its share of the take-home cola market from 3.5 per cent in 1996 to 4 per cent last year after securing distribution agreements with Safeway, Asda, Sainsbury and Woolworth. It has worked with Tesco since its launch in November 1994, but has yet to persuade J Sainsbury to stock the product. Mr Kirkbride said turnover

last year had reached £30 million on volumes of 129 million litres, although he admitted it was still making a loss. "We have yet to make a profit but we wouldn't expect to at this stage of a start-up brand," he said. "But we wouldn't be investing more money in it if we didn't see the potential to do so." He said fighting Coke and Pepsi had proved costly in what was a "promotion-driven" market, but he hoped to move into the black within three years. Around £7 million was spent on promoting it last year, of which £5 million was on TV advertising.

Johnston and HCN ready to go to MMC

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

JOHNSTON PRESS and Home Counties Newspapers are expected to take their £52 million merger deal to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission after Nigel Griffiths, Minister for Competition Policy and Consumer Affairs, refused yesterday to approve the deal.

Mr Griffiths said he had decided not to approve the transaction without requiring a report from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. He decided that the deal would lead to an excessive concentration of regional and

local newspaper ownership in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. "I have competition concerns relating to the consequences for newspaper advertising rates in these areas," Mr Griffiths said. Johnston and Home Counties, had made it clear they did not want the delay and uncertainty caused by an MMC investigation, but they have now decided not to submit a revised proposal. They believe instead they will have a strong case to put to the MMC.

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Brown puts pensions in danger

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Company pension provision now seems to have peaked. It might fade fast, unless Gordon Brown and his chums stop stomping around winking axes on the tax breaks that alone hold up the entire pensions movement. So far, signs of decline are modest. But there is a steady trend from schemes that guarantee pensions based on final salary to those that buy pensions to the value of an individual's savings in the fund.

As yet, money purchase accounts for only 15 per cent of funds pooled by the National Association of Pension Funds, but more than half the schemes that have started in the past 20 years. A rising tide of companies is also closing their final salary schemes to new members and offering them money purchase instead.

Nothing wrong with that. In theory, investment risks are transferred to the member. But final salary guarantees are rarely what they seem. Few can expect to work for the same employer for life, so huge secret transfers are made, typically from young workers to those who join the board in their forties or fifties.

The problem is that most money purchase schemes are mean. Contributions to final salary schemes average 17 per cent of pay, but employees and employers together put an average of only 9 per cent into money purchase schemes.

Actuaries used to suggest that a joint contribution of at least 10 per

cent of pay was needed to offer a reasonable hope of a decent pension in retirement relative to earnings in work. But that was before Mr Brown wielded his axe last summer. He is now harvesting £5 billion a year from investment returns by stopping funds reclaiming tax pre-paid on dividends.

Nearer 12 per cent of pay may now be needed to provide a secure retirement, preferably more. But the trend is to cut company contributions, or at least to stop them rising again after the fat years of contribution holidays.

Almost nine in ten companies with open-ended schemes expect their costs to rise as a result of Mr Brown's raid. The trend to curtail final pension costs will accelerate. Business no longer trusts the Treasury to keep the pension tax regime intact.

Few would bet against Mr Brown clipping tax relief on contributions in his Budget next month and the promised stakeholder pension gives the opportunity for further cuts in relief, if it is made compulsory. If people have no choice, you do not have to give them an incentive. Yet those who favour compulsion will be buttressed by the NAPP's finding that far fewer employees join

schemes if they must consciously choose to opt in rather than opt out.

If force is used, growing firms could feel justified in offering the stakeholder pension and nothing more. Employees who change jobs may also find that this is all they will be offered. The grey pound could soon be shrinking, the globe-trotting grannies who currently bolster the takings of holiday companies back at their fee-less fideses.

Peak profits railroad BT

Sir Peter Bonfield is adamant that his shareholders are urging him not to give them their cash back but to go out and blow it on a major acquisition. And why not? It may be only a few months ago that Sir Peter and his chairman, Sir Iain Vallance, were looking like a couple who would sign up for a

timeshare apartment in the desert and then pay extra for the double glazing but shareholders can have short memories. Since other mugs arrived to bail them out, the two knights can now point to their abortive MCI bid as a highly successful venture.

But not every deal comes with such a gold-plated exit route. Shareholders who are now encouraging BT in its aspirations to find a US acquisition should also be cautioning against undue haste. Even with two directors on the board of MCI, the company seemed to have pitifully little idea of what it was proposing to buy, hence the embarrassing need to renegotiate drastically the price once the true state of MCI's finances became apparent.

Luckily, the unravelling of the MCI debacle, with its outcome of a \$2.25 billion windfall profit, should ensure that BT cannot rush headlong into an unsatisfactory liaison. While it may be only weeks away from reveal-

ing its chosen partner, a formal deal will have to wait many months until WorldCom's generous takeover of MCI is completed.

What yesterday's third-quarter figures made clear is just why BT feels impelled to make an acquisition. Without the compensation for its failed bid, profits peaked. The fear is that BT has gone on growth, its share of the home market now succumbing to concerted attack and entry into continental Europe costing money rather than earning it.

Just as they had second thoughts about the merits of MCI, Sir Peter and Sir Iain now appear to be revising their ideas about what BT might profitably do in the future. All the excitement about pushing entertainment down the line is now passé, despite the campaign for the legislative change that would allow it to do so. The company has now realised that the market for home entertainment faces

chance to make an impact. Lord Hollick is a very hands-on chief executive and Arculus is but chief operating officer. When that title was first introduced at Marks & Spencer the holder was whispered of as Chopoff.

If Lord Hollick envisaged a role with similar connotations, David Arculus was not the man to fill it. He was ready for a top job after leaving his highly successful long-term double act with Robin Miller at Emap. Now he has apparently found one.

If Civen were looking for someone who might oversee its newly acquired IPC business on the road to expansion, he might be the man. With suggestions in the market that magazine publisher IPC might already have ideas for aggressively expanding its business, an established figure with a strong City following could come in useful.

Out of chaos...

THE National Audit Office's report into the sale of HMSO fairly bristles with indignation at the mess into which the business had been allowed to degenerate. Such was the financial chaos that Rupert Pennant Rea and his team were effectively paid to take it away, their eventual bid price being less than the debt the nation retained. But it has not taken long to make it profitable. Why didn't the advisers suggest sorting it out before selling?

Chopoff, and the labours of Arculus

To lose one executive is usual, to lose two begins to cause concern. To then try and insist on the disaffected individuals carrying out the full term of their contracts carries the risk of mayhem, while also looking distinctly peevish.

Lord Hollick would be well advised to wave a gracious farewell publicly to the two men who wish to depart his United News & Media and to ponder privately why, in particular, David Arculus felt that a year was more than enough time to be spent in his organisation.

When he arrived at UNM from Emap, Arculus brought an immediate boost to the company's share price. But he has had little

Delta swap with BICC forces 870 job losses

By ADAM JONES

THE British cable-making industry is to shrink under a proposed exchange of assets by BICC and Delta, involving the loss of about 870 jobs. Both companies have been seriously afflicted by over-supply in Europe and the strength of the pound. Delta's share price has more than halved since 1996 and BICC shares have tumbled nearly as far.

Yesterday's deal, which is subject to approval by the Office of Fair Trading, was designed to cut some excess capacity. The restructuring will involve BICC taking a £140 million exceptional charge in its 1997 accounts. Delta said its profit and loss account will take a £77 million hit, including £28 million of previously written-off goodwill.

The swap involves Delta selling BICC its utility cables, utility accessories and rubber cables businesses. BICC will then shut down the factories, which are at Brimsdown in Enfield, North London, Swansea and Derby.

The BICC power distribution cable factory in Wrexham will then take on the existing Delta contracts, estimated at six to 12 months of orders, and will try to retain the Delta customers subsequently.

Alan Jones, BICC chief executive, said this would enhance BICC's leading position in power utilities cabling, an area where Delta is a much smaller player. BICC will sell its construction and building wire business, based in Wrexham, to Delta in return. Delta will then relocate the Wrexham business to existing Delta operations in Llanelli and Derby. Two distribution sites in Chesington, Surrey, and Halesley, Cheshire, will also be closed.

The various closures in the swap will lead to about 650 job losses at Delta and BICC. BICC will also pay Delta £5.2 million to even out the value of the exchanged assets.

In a separate transaction,

Delta is selling its copper rod mill and enamelled winding wires operation in Brimsdown to BICC for £17.8 million. This will then be closed, with the loss of up to 220 jobs, and the work transferred to BICC facilities in Prescott and Huyton Quarry on Merseyside.

John Scott-Maxwell, Delta chief executive, said the deal will remove nearly all of Delta's exposure to "commodity" cable.

Delta said its beefed-up construction and building wire business, the only remaining commodity cables activity, will be in a better position to compete with European imports.

BICC said the deal would be earnings-enhancing, with the benefits flowing through from the 1998 financial year if OFT approval comes quickly. Delta said it would enhance earnings in the first full year after completion.

Tempus, page 30



John Reeve sees no reason for the insurance broker to abandon its independence

Willis Corroon surprises its critics with 6% dividend rise

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

WILLIS CORROON Group, the insurance broker, confounded critics of its strategy to remain independent by announcing yesterday its first increase in dividends for four years.

The company will pay 1.75p in the first interim dividend for 1998, a modest rise of 6 per cent. Dividend payments last year totalled 6.6p, no change from the year before.

Despite struggling against falling premium rates and the strong pound the company has succeeded in advancing pre-tax profits by 4 per cent to £91.6 million. Without currency movements the rise would have been 15 per cent.

Excluding disposals, such as Sovereign, the Loyds underwriter, brokerage and fee revenue rose 4 per cent whilst growth in costs was held at 3 per cent.

In the UK, operating profit rose £6.9 million to £60.5 million. But in the US, a poor first three quarters saw profits fall £5.7 million to £27.7 million, and it is expected to sell Plum, a US subsidiary specialising in insuring local

authorities. The positive news pushed the share price up 4p to 135p, and the results relieve the pressure on Willis Corroon, the world's fourth largest broker, to find a partner, such as Sedgwick, the UK broker ranked third in the world.

John Reeve, executive chairman, said there was no need for the company to abandon its independence. "As time goes by clients and the insurance industry in general want to see alternatives to the two big US brokers [Aon and Marsh McLennan]."

However, Mr Reeve said the outlook for 1998 was tough. The insurance broking industry remained plagued with overcapacity leading to a 15-20 per cent cut in premiums in January. Currency turbulence would knock profits further. He said the company was looking to make further acquisitions in Europe and Latin America.

Analysts forecast that earnings would grow 4 per cent this year.

Tempus, page 30

Merrydown ends search for bidder

By DOMINIC WALSH

MERRYDOWN, the cider maker, is expected to announce today that takeover talks have been abandoned after the company failed to attract high enough offers.

The board, under its new chairman Andy Nash, is now expected to pursue plans to slim down the group and strengthen its financial position from a lower cost base.

Industry sources suggest Merrydown may already be in talks with third parties to raise equity finance.

Bid approaches were revealed in December as Merrydown reported interim losses of nearly £1 million as a result of a sharp drop in sales of Two Dogs, the controversial alcopop drink. The company took a £630,000 charge after deciding to hand distribution of Two Dogs to Sumish & Newcastle.

Shareholders will be hoping that Mr Nash, a former managing director of the rival cider maker, Matthew Clark, will bring stability to the company after a rollercoaster ride in recent years.

Richard Purdey, his predecessor, who has stepped down to become non-executive deputy chairman, was initially applauded when he acquired the rights to Two Dogs, but could provide no response as copycat products flooded the market.

Westminster Health buys scanner group

By PAUL DURMAN

WESTMINSTER Health Care is continuing its rapid expansion outside nursing homes, even though this move has diluted its latest earnings.

The company yesterday announced the £3.5 million purchase of North Thames Imaging Group, an operator of medical scanners. This comes after a series of deals including the £15.7 million acquisition of Libria, which brought the Titchhurst psychiatric hospital into the group, and last month's sale of 12 nursing homes to Tamaris.

Paul Saper, an analyst with Laing & Buisson, the healthcare consultancy, expects the contribution from the

nursing home business to fall to 50 per cent by 2000.

Westminster was reporting flat pre-tax profits of £8.4 million, on sales up by 30 per cent, to £65.1 million. It said that profits from existing operations had risen by 8 per cent, to £9.1 million, and that the profits contribution from non-nursing home activities rose to 28 per cent of the total. Losses in acquired businesses amounted to £400,000. Westminster suffered low margins on the Beaumont nursing home business acquired from PPP because of low-bed occupancy.

The interim dividend rises from 2.6p to 2.8p, to be paid on April 7.

OGS plans to float for £30m injection

By PAUL DURMAN

OXFORD GlycoSciences, a drug development company specialising in proteins, is seeking to raise £30 million in a flotation expected to value the group at about £100 million.

The company's lead product, a possible treatment for liver cancer, is soon to start second phase clinical trials. In the short-term OGS hopes to generate significant revenues through its alliance with Incyte Pharmaceuticals, an American company that is producing annual turnover of \$100 million (£62.5 million) from selling its genetic information database to leading drug companies. Through

Incyte, OGS intends to offer its expertise in protein separation and identification.

The management currently owns about 7.6 per cent of the company, with 1.5 per cent held by Michael Kranda, chief executive. OGS's chairman is Kirk Raab, former chief executive of Genentech, one of the pioneers of the American biotechnology industry.

OGS has raised about £30 million of equity over the last three years, and still has cash in excess of £12 million. Its development spending left it with losses last year of £7.5 million. Last month, Incyte invested \$5 million (£3 million), paying 119p a share.

Colt plans a gallop into Europe

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

COLT, the independent telecommunications company, said yesterday that it hoped to be operating in 12 European countries before the end of this year.

The company, which specialises in building its own networks for business users, said network construction had already begun in Zurich and that Colt also planned to develop new markets in Brussels, Madrid, Milan and two other cities.

Colt, led by Paul Chisholm, chief executive, outlined future plans as it announced a more than doubling of revenue to £81.5 million and a nearly trebled gross profit of £15 million for the year to the end of December.

The proportion of turnover generated outside the UK grew to 14 per cent in the

fourth quarter compared with 3 per cent in the same period last year. The increase was helped by the launching of a service in Berlin ahead of schedule.

Colt's revenue has been doubling each year and analysts are expecting a figure of £130 million to £140 million for the current year.

Profits are unlikely to follow suit given the scale of investment in new networks. Last year Colt raised more than £200 million in secondary equity and debt offerings and does not expect to have to raise any new capital until the middle of 1999.

Energis, the telephone company, which uses power transmission lines, said yesterday that it had won a contract to provide call answering services for Eurostar.



Networking nous: Paul Chisholm, Colt's chief executive

Watmoughs attracts rival suitor

By ADAM JONES

SHARES in Watmoughs, the printer that has attracted a hostile bid from Quebecor Printing of Canada, leapt yesterday after it was approached by another potential bidder that may offer more.

The company said it has received an approach from a third party that may lead to an offer in excess of 300p per ordinary share. Quebecor had offered 257p, valuing the company at £188 million.

Ordinary shares raced from 273p to 320p in late afternoon, with preference shares at 119p. The Office of Fair Trading might refer the Quebecor bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

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STOCK MARKET



MICHAEL CLARK

Stock Market Writer of the Year

Orange adds colour in a drab day for FTSE

SHARES in Britain's mobile-phone operators are ringing all the right numbers with City investors.

They were all marked sharply higher amid growing speculation of imminent corporate activity and talk that trading conditions remain buoyant. Orange was the best-performing share among the top 100 companies with a leap of 16p, or almost 5 per cent, to an all-time high of 361p.



Hans Snook saw speculation lift Orange to an all-time high

That would leave Hans Snook, chief executive of Orange, free to continue to develop the business.

Vodafone was also chased higher with a jump of 20p at 540p. One buyer whetted traders' appetites by snapping up a line of two million shares overnight at 520p.

There was also speculative buying of Securicor, 5 1/2p better at 373p. Traders insist it must be close to disposing of its 40 per cent stake in Cellnet, Britain's second-biggest mobile-phone operator, to British Telecom, its partner in the venture.

BT rose 4 1/2p to 574p on the back of third-quarter results. Cable & Wireless Communications, which operates Mercury, rose 3p to 318p.

The rest of the equity market rounded off an uninspiring day with losses across the board. Setbacks for markets in the Far East overnight and dull results from several leading companies left investors cold as they continued to ponder the threat of higher interest rates from the Bank of England.

Opening losses by the Dow Jones industrial average in New York only added to the woes of traders back across the pond. But the FTSE 100 index closed just above its 53.4 level at the day, ending 53.4 down at 5,525.5. Total turnover reached 807 million shares.

Among leaders, ICI rose 12p to £10.60 on the back of a "buy" recommendation from Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker. But Laing is a seller of Courtaulds, down 12 1/2p at 260 1/2p.

Chelsea Village scored an own goal with confirmation that Ruud Gulit has quit as manager. The shares touched 5p before ending the session 7p cheaper at 91 1/2p. Hay & Robertson also dropped 1 1/2p to 153 1/2p on the news of

Gullit's departure. It owns the Admiral brand of sportswear and has paid Gulit £100,000 to promote his own brand of sports clothing worldwide.

The departure of David Arculus as chief operating officer left United News & Media 20p lower at 69 1/2p. He had been with United, publisher of The Express, only ten months. His contract expires in April next year.

Carlton Communications fell to a two-year low, down 6 1/2p at 413p, as brokers continued to reflect concern over prospects for television advertising revenues and video duplication.

Restek initial retreated 1 1/2p to 291p as speculation that it may be about to hit the acquisition trail boiled over. Celsis International has become the latest company to

issue a profits warning. The diagnostics development specialist dropped 19p to 51 1/2p after telling the City that profits will fall short of expectations. Brokers had been forecasting between £1 million and £1.5 million.

A bid approach "substantially" in excess of 300p for a share sent Watnoughs surging 46 1/2p to 320p. The printer is currently the subject of an unwanted offer of 257p a share from Quebecor, the Canadian printer, giving the business a price tag of £188 million.

Another company on the receiving end of a bid was Spandex, 5 1/2p higher at 302 1/2p. The sign-making equipment group says it has received an approach which may lead to a bid. But the shares have tumbled from the 345p level last year amid worries over the strength of the pound.

Biocompatibles began to recover some of its composure. The shares fell sharply earlier this week after a series of presentations and a downgrading from Merrill Lynch, the broker. The price rallied 23p to 153p. Only last month the shares were changing hands at 512p.

Investor Colin Blackburn is now sitting on a tidy paper profit from his investment in Tadpole Technology. The shares added 4 1/2p to 26 1/2p, after briefly touching 29 1/2p, as Bernard Hulme, chief executive, moved to confirm a Java applications software deal within the next few weeks.

Blackburn bought his shares at prices all the way up to 17p. Delta responded positively with a rise of 18p to 265p on news of the asset swap with BICC, a firm at 140p.

GI LONDON: Bond prices in London regained some composure with the help of firmer US treasury bonds. They were sent reeling this week by the Bank of England's warning that interest rates are set to rise if the inflation target is to be met.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt closed £1 higher at £124 in moderate demand, while in the cash market Treasury 7.25 per cent 2007 finished three ticks better at £109 1/2.

NEW YORK: Shares remained weaker in morning trade as investors took profits after this week's record gains. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 59.79 points at 8,254.76.

Shares in Britain's mobile-phone operators are ringing all the right numbers with City investors. They were all marked sharply higher amid growing speculation of imminent corporate activity and talk that trading conditions remain buoyant.

That would leave Hans Snook, chief executive of Orange, free to continue to develop the business. Vodafone was also chased higher with a jump of 20p at 540p.

There was also speculative buying of Securicor, 5 1/2p better at 373p. Traders insist it must be close to disposing of its 40 per cent stake in Cellnet, Britain's second-biggest mobile-phone operator, to British Telecom, its partner in the venture.

BT rose 4 1/2p to 574p on the back of third-quarter results. Cable & Wireless Communications, which operates Mercury, rose 3p to 318p.

MAJOR INDICES table with columns for location and index value.

RECENT ISSUES table listing company names and share prices.

RIGHTS ISSUES table listing company names and share prices.

MAJOR CHANGES table listing company names and share prices.

OTHER STERLING table listing various financial metrics.

MONEY RATES (%) table listing interest rates for various currencies.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%) table listing deposit rates.

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co) table listing metal prices.

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES table listing exchange rates.

Mkt Rates for Feb 12 table listing market rates.

FTSE 100 table listing top 100 company share prices.

FTSE 250 table listing top 250 company share prices.

TEMPUS

Doubts welling up

WHAT will it take for the City to fall out of love with the oil sector? The first slap in the face came from BP which delivered poor growth in oil production and rotten refining margins.

Yesterday Shell handbagged investors with \$300 million worth of currency losses and an Asian marketing mess. Initial horror has now been translated into grim acceptance that a company with such huge Asian investments could not hope to escape unscathed.

Unluckily, analysts have short-term concerns and continue to make unrealistic profit projections. Could pressure from the

deal-makers in the back room be keeping the front of house securities business from taking a more bearish perspective? Moreover, Shell's long-term planners seem to be anxious to trim back a little of the huge spending programme that they launched last year.

The rise in Delta's shares from 247p to 265p is a recognition that Jon Scott-Maxwell, chief executive, is serious about implementing his restructuring plan. BICC

continues to disappoint. It has taken steps to reform its European cable business with rationalisation in Germany and Italy but this has failed to stem the prolonged slide in its shares, which edged 1/2p higher to 140p yesterday.

Neither company offers a compelling investment opportunity.

They have essentially agreed not to compete in certain areas, each allowing its erstwhile competitor to take existing business and shut down manufacturing sites to reduce industry capacity.

These are not perfect fits.

Willis Corroon

WONDERS will never cease. Willis Corroon has actually managed a small increase in dividends, its first in four years.

nation detector company joined the market in 1993, looks absurdly overdue. The company's debut profits will miss the lowest forecast by a few hundred thousand pounds and yet the company has lost nearly 60 per cent of its market value this year.

Moreover, talk that the company could join forces with Sedgwick, its chief UK rival, to take on the big boys from the US seems as inappropriate as ever.

At first sight, the latest collapse in the shares to 51 1/2p, the lowest since the contain-

ment of Willis Corroon's performance means he will be given the benefit of the doubt for a while longer.

It is taking a very long time to reach a happy ending. Yesterday's profit warning was a nasty surprise for any investor who, with Tempus, thought these shares looked a good bet last autumn when they traded at close to 100p.

Edited by Paul Durman

Other Sterling

Money Rates (%)

European Money Deposits (%)

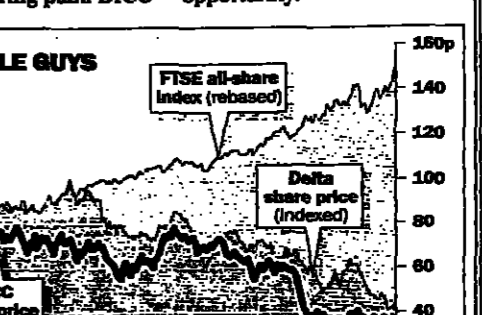
Gold/Precious Metals (Baird & Co)

Sterling Spot and Forward Rates

Mkt Rates for Feb 12

FTSE 100

FTSE 250



THE CABLE GUYS

These are not perfect fits.

Willis Corroon

Other Sterling

Money Rates (%)

European Money Deposits (%)

Gold/Precious Metals (Baird & Co)

Sterling Spot and Forward Rates

Mkt Rates for Feb 12

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

Other Sterling

Money Rates (%)

European Money Deposits (%)

Gold/Precious Metals (Baird & Co)

Sterling Spot and Forward Rates

Mkt Rates for Feb 12

FTSE 100

FTSE 250

Other Sterling

سكوا من الأصل

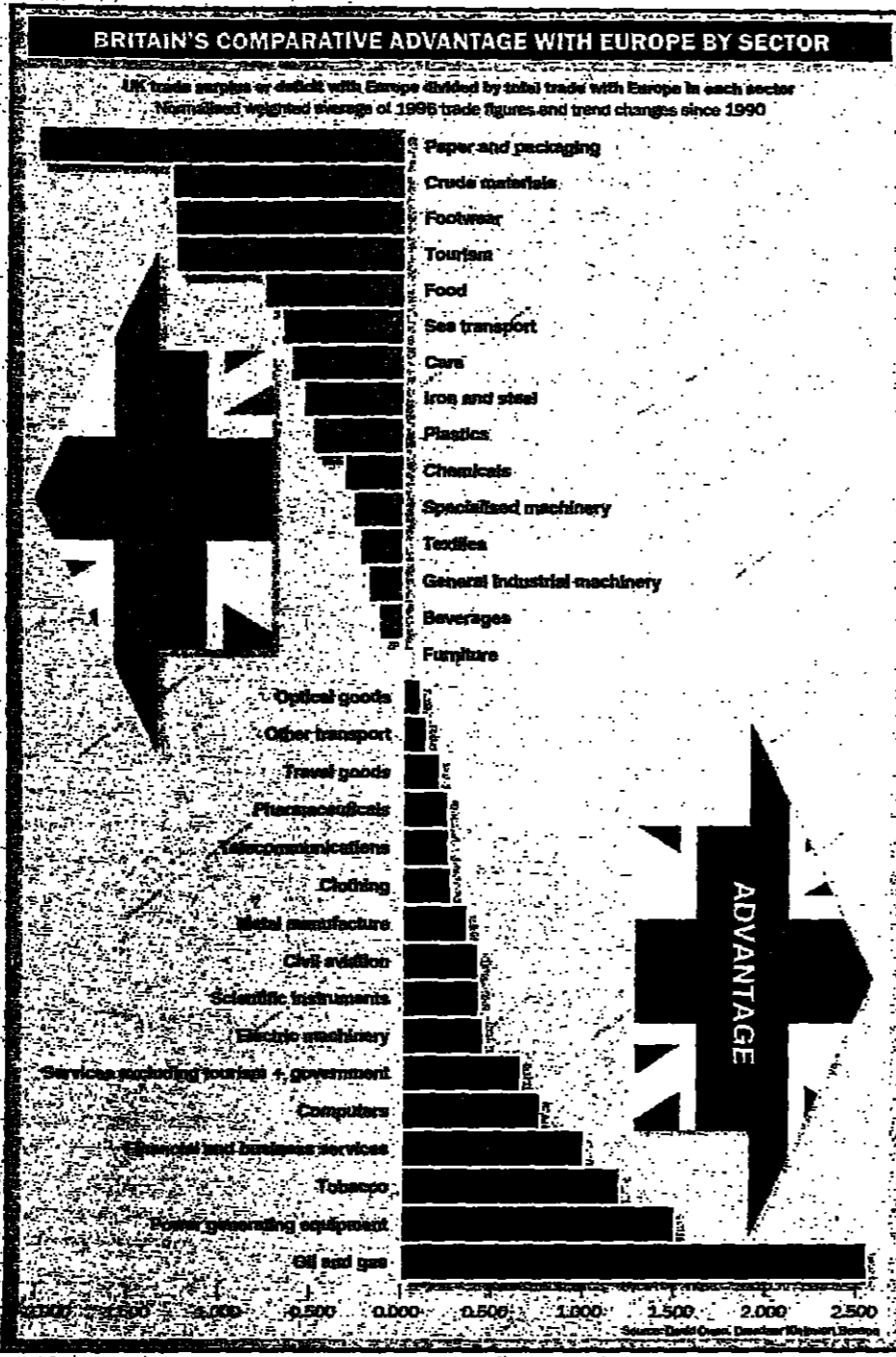


ANATOLE KALETSKY

Bank's critics could end up right for the wrong reasons

Britain may be able to cope much better than thought with strong pound

When Gordon Brown gave responsibility for monetary policy to the Bank of England nearly all City economists and industrialists were delighted. I was agast. Nine months later, nearly all industrialists are agast about the impact of the strong pound which was the inevitable consequence of Bank independence and the City is bewildered by the confusion over interest rates and sterling prompted by Wednesday's quarterly Inflation Report. I am delighted.



mark, especially against the pound and the future euro. In a sense they can all be boiled down to one point: British industries are now more internationally competitive, in terms of both quality and costs, than they were in the 1970s and 1980s. This suggests that the pound will stabilise at a higher level than in the 1980s — not a much lower one, as industrialists and City analysts expect.

Mr Owen analysed the competitiveness or "comparative advantage" of various British industries, by looking at the ratio of Britain's net exports to Europe to the total value of trade in each industry. While his methods are too complex to discuss here in detail (and are subject to all kinds of qualifications) his broad conclusions are clear — and seem to conform with commonsense observation. On the whole, the industries in which Britain has become most competitive are those, such as pharmaceuticals, business services and computer software, with a strong emphasis on "knowledge" and with strong prospects for long-term growth. The industries in which Britain is least competitive are those dependent on heavy capital investment or cheap labour, and in many of these industries global demand is growing relatively slowly and competition from Third World producers is becoming most intense.

But if the Bank has done so well, why is Britain's manufacturing industry on the brink of recession, having just recorded the sharpest fall in output since 1991? Why are exports falling even more steeply? And why, despite all this hardship, does the Bank believe that interest rates will soon have to rise even higher, as it clearly implied in Wednesday's Inflation Report?

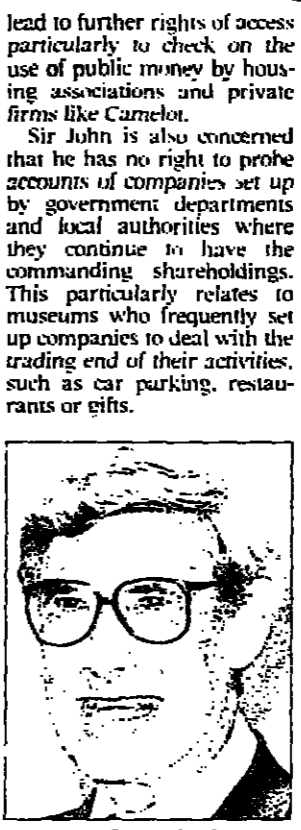
even on the radar-screen compared with the real sex-symbols of the 1990s: such stars of central banking as Hans Tietmeyer, Alan Greenspan and, now, Eddie George. Financial confidence can sometimes become too much of a good thing: last year was a clear case in point. Secondly, and more fundamentally, Mr Brown's decision to entrust monetary and fiscal policy to different institutions was bound to jeopardise the management of the exchange rate, especially at a time of structural upheavals in both British and European political and economic arrangements. Monetary, fiscal and exchange-rate policies are so interdependent that they should all be managed together. This has always been the strongest objection to the principle of an independent central bank.

This raises a question which has been much discussed in the past few months in this column and which, reading between the lines, is at the heart of the uncertainty expressed by the MPC this week: is the pound's present exchange rate of around DM3 really unsustainable and overvalued? If the answer is "yes", as analysts in the City, Government and industry almost all believe, then the MPC will have to raise interest rates — and more than once — to control inflation, since the inevitable depreciation of the pound to DM2.70 or lower could prove extremely inflationary in a period of full employment.

But what if sterling is not fundamentally overvalued? What if, instead of falling, it stabilised in the next few years at around DM3? In that case, inflation would not accelerate at all. In fact, many prices would probably fall. Import prices have stayed up largely because of the weakness of competition, especially in retail markets. But an even more important factor has been the universal belief that the strong pound was just a temporary aberration. The implication was that importers who cut their prices would be caught out once the pound fell back to a "normal" level. If the belief in a permanently strong pound were to catch on, competition would push import prices dramatically downwards, obviating any need for higher interest rates.

Watchdog looks to be let off the lead a little more regularly

Sir John Bourn, the public spending watchdog, last night called for new powers to follow the trail of all public funds. He said it was "anachronistic" that he was able to chase public funds to source in his work for the European Commission and the UN, but not on behalf of Parliament.



Bourn: forensic rigour

He is a formidable personality and Whitehall departments rarely quarrel with his findings or attempt to conceal information from him. Many officials fear his forensic rigour in ploughing through accounts. The Cabinet Office has been particularly nervous about his long-awaited report into the controversial sale of HMSO, now trading as The Stationery Office, which is to be published tomorrow. This is expected to renew interest in his role as champion of the taxpayer.

He has also set himself a new agenda at home. Sir John is anxious that Britain takes a lead in tackling the labyrinthine Common Agricultural Policy, and is particularly involved at present in ensuring that the audit arrangements for the proposed Welsh Assembly and Scottish Parliament are compatible with his UK-wide responsibilities for Parliament.

Brown, the Chancellor, asked him to carry out an audit of the Treasury assumptions in advance of the Budget. It was an unusual departure and one which delighted Sir John. He made it clear he would be interested in further requests — particularly the opportunity to assess the criteria for Britain to join a single European currency. "I have not been asked to assess the criteria for EMU, but I would be interested in doing this. My Italian counterpart was invited to do this. His recommendation was that Italy met the criteria." Sir John also audits the International Atomic Energy Authority, the International Maritime Organisation, the Pan-American Health Organisation, the International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund, and the International Labour Organisation.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Let the buyer decide on Migs

From Mr Roland Gardner Sir, Mortgage indemnity guarantees are neither "iniquitous" nor "oppressive" (Commentary, February 6). They are simply part of the price of a mortgage product, and any discerning purchaser will be quite able to work out which product suits him best. You are quick to praise Halifax for abolishing Migs. Let me remind you that they have not been abolished for loans over 90 per cent of value, which is where the steep premiums are payable. For a Halifax customer borrowing £100,000 on a purchase price of £100,000, there will be a "saving" of about £1,000 in Mig costs as a result of this decision. However if the same client goes to the Nationwide,

Founding grandfather

From Mr David Gordon Sir, Fraser Nelson's article on the development of Great Universal Stores (Analysis, February 4) contains one notable error. He states that "the company was founded in 1917 by Sir Isaac Wolfson, Leonard's father and David's uncle". It was in fact founded in 1900 by my grandfather, Abraham Rose, together with his brother, George. Isaac Wolfson joined as a salesman 30 years later. Yours faithfully, DAVID GORDON, 106 Burges Road, Thorpe Bay, Essex, SS1 3JL.

New Liffe

THE new electronic trading system at Liffe will go live on November 30. Daniel Hodson, the market's chief executive, announced with a fanfare yesterday — and a sideswipe, perhaps, at the London Stock Exchange. The computer experts are testing the system at Cannon Street, and by the end of July we are promised a series of dress rehearsals, with all the potential for chaos they bring.

cost £10 million to develop. Hodson insists it is on schedule and running within budget. "The cost compares favourably with other similar systems." Given the long rivalry between Liffe and the Stock Exchange, and the problems the latter has had with its computers, I wonder which other systems he might be referring to. "I wouldn't know," says a Liffe spokesman, blandly.



He wants to spend more time with his friends and family

GLAD to see Merrill Lynch has become the first gaffe to come thundering into the Japanese retail market. Just one worry, though. How will Japanese small shareholders manage to do business with a firm whose name virtually no one can pronounce?

Ship shape

MY REPORT on the appointment of a new managing director at Brittany Ferries has caused great reactions on the high seas. Intriguingly, it seems Jean-Michel Masson had interviewed for the job before, and lost out to his predecessor, Claude Geronimi, who did not last. His departure after just six months cleared the way for



Masson to reapply, and he boards next month. Ian Carruthers, UK managing director, takes me severely to task for any suggestion that a lack of French government aid might scuttle the enterprise. The French are awaiting a report from accountants which will decide just how much Brittany Ferries gets in future, to pay for that country's daff social costs of employment. Until the number-crunchers have reported, no cash will be forthcoming. Even before this, he assures me that his company is murdering P&O on the Ports-mouthing run. I actually travelled on one of his ferries a while back, and it was a cut above the average. I have to confess. Long may he run.

Love all

ANY number of employers have tied themselves in politically correct knots by monitoring, banning or otherwise interfering with office romances. Our own dear NatWest used to forbid them until quite recently. IBM has always had a strict policy of not allowing employees who work together any sort of personal relationship but has, in

good time for Valentine's Day, just relaxed its rule. Yet over at Asda, such canoodling is positively encouraged, it seems. A rather icky initiative this year — surely not dreamed up by Archie Norman? — is to ask employees to submit their tender feelings to colleagues via the office e-mail. The recipients of the 20 most romantic messages will receive a "Chippendale Cupid", whatever that may be, at their desks today. The senders are promised anonymity. They might remember, however, that electronic messages are extremely easy to track back to their origin. And blackmail is such a nasty business.

STRANGE scenes in Eindhoven, where the president of Philips has been forced to defend his health record after reports that he might have to stand down. At the results conference Cor Boonstra admitted to a hernia last year, now fully cured. And added: "We have handled this issue once and for all. If you want to go outside and test my strength, I will be you."

Hard to imagine a British chairman offering to take a reporter outside for a quick bout of fisticuffs to resolve a difficult question, although I am sure plenty have been tempted. As it happens, I have only once been physically assaulted by the director of a publicly quoted company. Something about always writing negative things about his company, as I recall. It went bust some months later.

Over the past two years this column has suggested many reasons to expect a strong

Share Warrants to Bearer

The Coupon to be presented for the above dividend will be No. 200 which must be deposited at Lloyds Bank Registrars Corporate Actions, Ground Floor, P.O. Box 1000, Antholin House, 71 Queen Street, London EC4N 15L (not later than 24th April, 1998 to receive payment on 15th May, 1998) or may be surrendered through Messieurs Lazard Frères et Cie, 121 boulevard Haussmann, 75382, Paris Cedex 08.

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Final Dividend 1997 Notice is hereby given that a balance of the Register will be struck on 24th April, 1998 for the preparation of warrants for a Final dividend for the year 1997 of 8.0p per 25p Ordinary Share. If approved at the Annual General Meeting to be held on 8th May, 1998 the dividend will be paid on 15th May, 1998.

For transferees to receive this dividend, their transfers must be lodged with the Company's Registrar: Lloyds Bank Registrars, The Causeway, Worthing, West Sussex BN99 6DA, not later than 3 p.m. on 24th April, 1998.

By Order of the Board Miss J.E. Munsiff Secretary

Shell Centre, London SE1 7NA 12th February, 1998



Love is on the system at Archie Norman's Asda

هكذا من الاجل

Losses across the board

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Table with multiple columns listing stock prices and changes for various sectors including ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, BANKS, BREWERIES, PUBS & REST, DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, ELECTRICITY, ELECTRONIC & ELECT, CHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, ENGINEERING, INSURANCE, and DISTRIBUTORS.

Table with multiple columns listing stock prices and changes for sectors including INVESTMENT TRUSTS, ENGINEERING, VEHICLES, FOOD MANUFACTURERS, MEDIA, and MINING.

Table with multiple columns listing stock prices and changes for sectors including RETAILERS, GENERAL, OTHER FINANCIAL, PHARMACEUTICALS, SUPPORT SERVICES, PRINTING & PAPER, PROPERTY, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, TRANSPORT, WATER, RETAILERS, FOOD, and ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET.

Advertisement for 'Make an investment in your future.' featuring 'SEVEN SEAS' and 'ONE-A-DAY' cod liver oil products. Includes a logo and descriptive text.

Vertical text on the left margin: 'L S sales', 'shares', 'ropes rise', 'stock split', 'acquisition', 'profit halved', 'plus up 60%', 'approach', 'CONTACT', 'ILS FOR', 'ERSEAS', 'SCRIPTION', 'TO:', 'TIME', 'and', 'NDAY TIME', 'ffective effect, please', 'ers and queries', 'International', 'ones Department', 'Box 172', 'El 90U, England', '+44 171 782 6110', '+44 171 782 6130'.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Main table containing unit trust prices, organized by fund type and name. Includes columns for fund name, price, and other financial metrics.

Advertisement for De Beers featuring the text: 'If music be the food of love, how about a little rock?' and the De Beers logo.

Source: FT Information. *Fiduciary information. **Fiduciary information. ***Fiduciary information. ****Fiduciary information.

Handwritten text at the bottom of the page: 'سكوت الامن'.

When Sir Isaiah Berlin died last November, one famous anecdote was gleefully retailed everywhere. It was the story of how Churchill was so impressed by the wartime dispatches penned by the brilliant young philosopher that he demanded to meet Berlin at a Downing Street lunch. Unfortunately, as in Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, the minion charged with locating the required man made a small but vital error, with the result that it was the bemused songwriter Irving Berlin who found himself being quizzed on global politics by an increasingly perplexed Churchill.

It may be a sign of my trivial mind, but I cannot help imagining what might have happened if Tony Blair had been EM at the time. He would have asked to meet the (then very trendy) Irving Berlin: the invitation would have gone by mistake to Isaiah; and the great thinker would have found himself being complimented on the eternal virtues of *White Christmas*.

A cold shower of awkward truths

Unfair? Of course. But can you recall another bunch of politicians quite as besotted with ephemeral pop culture as Blair's blokes? It would be rather sweet to see all those uncool, middle-aged Westminster suits cooing up to the derailed lions and bird-brained totties of the pop world, if it didn't all seem so dimmed calculating.

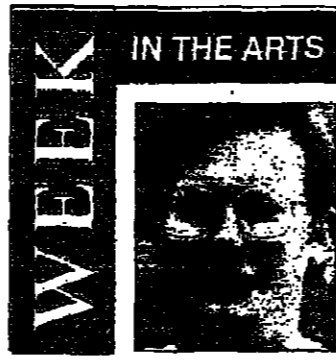
Such fakery was bound to end in tears. The only questions were when, where, whose and how. Now we know: last Monday night the Brit Awards; Deputy Prime Minister; bucket of water... and splash! Exit one soggy Prescott in monster huff. I don't suppose anybody had the nerve to say to him: "Hey, John, loosen up; it's only rock'n'roll!"

Of course, Chumbawamba's "political protest" was nothing but a publicity stunt, as Prescott's people said. Chumbawamba may

call themselves anarchists, but their particular brand of "revolution" conveniently appears to embrace a stinking lucrative contract with that substantial pillar of bourgeois capitalism, EMI. If that is anarchy in action, my name is Pierre Proudhon.

Nevertheless, when Chumbawamba's chief tubthumper, Danbert Nobacon, retorted that it was Prescott who was guilty of gimmickry by attending the Brits, you had to admit that the man in the fetching miniskirt had a point. If Cabinet ministers insist on drooling like starstruck pubescents over marginally talented celebs, they deserve public humiliation.

Even more significant than the actual incident, however, was the aftermath. Not until yesterday did EMI and the British Phonographic Industry, which runs the Brits, get round to apologising



RICHARD MORRISON

publicly to the politician with the bruised ego and soggy vest. The message from the pop world to the politicians seemed to be: you seek our friendship, but we certainly don't seek yours.

Of course the Government could provide certain services that the big record labels would find helpful. For instance, it could push for more international policing to counter the huge black market in bootleg recordings, said to deprive British companies of millions of sales each year.

It could also demand that, after months of apparently fruitless discussion, the European Union finally agrees new copyright legislation to cover the vast technological changes in the transmission of music. Anarchy on a scale unimaginable even by Chumbawamba will ensue if near-perfect pirate versions of new albums start to tumble down the Internet at a fraction of their shop price.

But if the Government doesn't take the initiative in these areas, do you think the music business will wither and die? Of course not. It is

a ferociously competitive industry, staffed by some of the sharpest hustlers in the land. The only thing it wants from Government is no government at all. The less red tape, the more profit. Indeed, the idea of government "creative industry" initiatives is privately considered by most pop executives to be risible, pointless and stifling.

There's something else. Pop music culture is inextricably tied to drug culture. From the Ecstasy pills consumed by the thousand in every dance club every weekend, and the casual references to heroin that litter the pages of the music press, to the sad litany of dope-induced pop star suicides, drugs are a ubiquitous part of the rock scene.

I don't condemn the musicians — most barely out of their teens — for "setting a bad example" to the

millions of kids who idolise them. The grim statistics suggest that many of the stars will themselves eventually pay a heavy price for their own hedonistic excesses. Nor do I condemn the record companies for turning a blind eye to the words and deeds of their own stars in their scramble for maximum profit — regrettable though such an amoral stance may be. It is not the music industry's job to be society's moral guardian.

But when senior ministers start getting chummy with pop luminaries who make no secret of their habits, the hypocrisy does stick in the throat. Outside the gates of a school not far from me, a 13-year-old child was caught recently offering dope to nine-year-olds. If the Government thinks that sort of spectacle is OK, ministers should be upfront and legalise it. If they don't, they should take a long hard look at their new "friends" in the music industry. And if a sudden cold shower helps the Deputy Prime Minister to wise up, it will have been water well spent.

Ingenuity of royal Scots

If you have never been to this theatre, formerly on the first floor of a pub but now in purpose-built premises of its own across the street, you will need to know its shape to understand how ingeniously Sam Walters's crisp production uses the space.

The stage is square, the audience sits in three rows along each side, and entrances are at the four corners. The scale is intimate, and you might think it hard to accommodate a play that takes in battles, castles surprised, blasted heaths and lines of kings stretching out to the crack of doom. Certainly, I thought this, and supposed that Walters must think so too, because it is 12 years since he last mounted a production of Shakespeare, and that was in the previous theatre.

I must now declare an interest. My own essay at directing last year at BAC was immeasurably helped by the bear-pit stage designed by TI Green, and at Richmond she has found another utterly unexpected way of exploiting space: this time by *delving* below the stage. Smoke drifting out of three grilles does not immediately indicate that the entire stage has been rebuilt



for this production. But then the witches emerge from the holes beneath the grilles, and when thrones, table or pail of water are needed in later scenes these are lifted out from below other trapdoors by any means that happens to be around at the time.

At the end of the play Paul Shelley's muscular thug of a Macbeth, bare-armed and butcher-like, unjoins the planking of the stage, disappearing below to fight to the death with Macduff. "The earth hath bubbles," says Banquo, and whether or not the design derives from his remark, this alternative to hugging furniture in from the corners and out again is an aesthetic delight.

The play's speeches are crammed with images and spattered with words (such as *insatiable*) that aren't to be found falling from many lips today. Yet the tones of voice uttered by Walters's

sturdy cast, and the straight connections these form between thought and word, draw us into the play's core. This is especially so, of course, with Shelley's interpretation. On the heath with Tim Welton's evidently decent Banquo, Macbeth is already a driven man. Admittedly, the men are fresh from the battlefield, but the interplay of eyes between them is telling.

Anxiety is the undercurrent in Shelley's opening scenes: "If we should fail!" bursts from him and his knees buckle. No question but he is the weaker partner here to Fiona Ramsay's poised Lady. Sometimes a fruitfulness in his voice works against the gruff commands, but he is clear about the later mad zigzags between fury and grim humour.

I like Walters's spare approach to the play. Duels are fought at long distance with invisible swords. The line of kings is a succession of rectangles of brilliant light diagonally crossing the stage. The galloping speed leading up to Lady Macduff's murder forms a fine contrast with the scarcely moving English scene that follows. Engrossing stuff.

JEREMY KINGSTON



Washday blues: Paul Shelley and Fiona Ramsay think clean thoughts in *Macbeth*

Bad heir days

To your Ancient Greek aristocrat, bad luck isn't simply a matter of being picked on by unsporing gods, it is embedded in the genes. The Greeks knew this long before the University of Wales's recent claim that misfortune can be genetically inherited.

In Racine's 17th-century play, *Hippolytus*, the puritanical son of Theseus, inherited it in spades. The would-be hero, itching to do noble deeds, is not only framed by his stepmother, Phaedra, after he repels her incestuous gropes, but he is ripped to pieces by one of Neptune's monsters before he has time to land his first chaste kiss on his equally unlucky girlfriend, Aricia.

In Peter Oswald's new version of *Phaedra* for International Theatre Link, Hippolytus clearly has trouble living in the shadow of Theseus's giant-killing deeds. Will Keen's monkish youth, fists clenched, eyes burning with icy self-righteousness, paints a convincing picture of frustrated heroism. But when Valerie Braddell's Phaedra takes to the stage, wrist on troubled brow, Paul Sprawson's circle of sand suddenly seems a tight fit. Built like an opera singer and looking dangerously menopausal, Phaedra signs her emotions with glares and small shuffling grabs at the space between Hippolytus and herself. If she wanted to, she could snap him over her knee; instead she puts the youth into deep Oedipal shock with a

Phaedra
BAC, SW11

melodramatic gush of feeling. The lopsided, highly formal spectacle is not helped by the fact that Oswald's verse can be ponderous and plain impenetrable in parts. But in the second half he puts intriguing flesh on the relationship between Martin Turner's suave-looking Theseus and his estranged son. The tease here is whether Theseus will withdraw the deadly curse he lays on Hippolytus when the latter is accused of incest.

"Save me the boring speeches of your specious excuses," roars Theseus beneath his slightly too modish haircut. There is pomposity, authority and odd-sounding English here, but also evidence of someone who likes feeding on the perversity of the lies condoned by Braddell's increasingly guilt-ridden and tearful Phaedra. It is in these grubby creases that the real drama catches fire.

Tim Carroll directs the proceedings on the small traverse stage with a deliberate, sometimes sporty, sense of ritual, duly sharpening the knife-edge that separates hate from lust, and justice from disaster. If nothing else, it makes you feel profoundly grateful that your blood relations are mere mortals.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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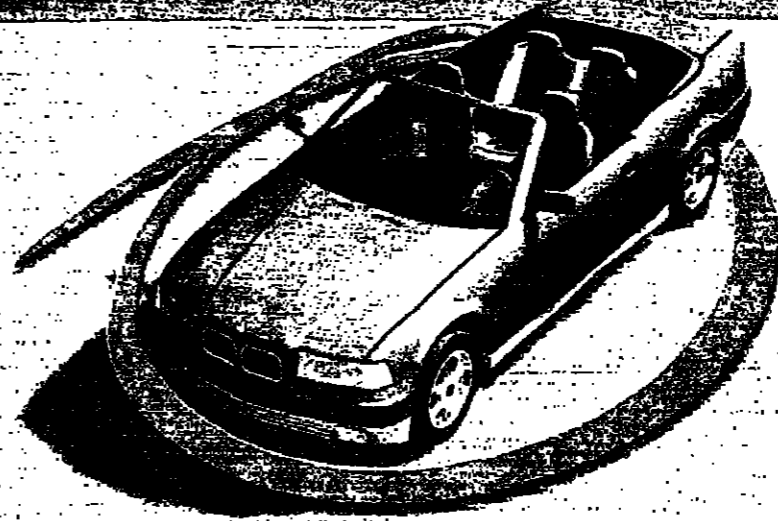
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Guy
ond

Mark Twain as the face of new country

Nashville hates her, but millions of record buyers can't be wrong about Shania Twain. Paul Sexton reports

Last September's Country Music Association Awards ceremony had humble pie for dessert. Shania Twain sashayed on to the stage, sang her new release and broke the hearts of those Nashville cats who were mourning for the multi-platinum Canadian star to fall flat on her face.

The sceptics had called her a chocolate-box industry confection, clinging to the fact that she seemed to come from nowhere and, sin of sins, did not tour. The jealousy was fuelled by her extraordinary success in the previous three years, in which Twain (whose first name is pronounced "Shu-nyeh," an Ojibway Indian word meaning "I'm on my way") has made North American cash registers positively purr.

Her 1993 debut album made a very modest mark, but its 1995 successor, *The Woman In Me*, pole-vaulted its way past the Dollies, Tamaras and Patsies to become the best-selling album by a female artist in country music history. The record now has a place in ten million American households and the Twain trophy cabinet groans with Grammys, CMA, *Billboard* Music awards and other decorations.

Nor has her success abated. The follow-up album, *Come On Over*, was released in America in November and has already shifted three million units.

But if Twain's million-dollar performance at the CMAs did not confound the disbelievers who had chosen to overlook her journeywoman years spent slogging the Canadian bar-room circuit, news of Twain's impending 1998-99 international touring extravaganza might just muddle those jealous sceptics for good.

Mention the subject and she delivers a feisty rebuttal. "There were definitely people who were quick to assume that I didn't play live because I didn't know how to," she says. "But those people are obviously just ignorant. I've been touring my whole life. I started singing in clubs in my early childhood. I paid my dues on that level without any question. It's amazing how people jump to conclusions. A lot of record companies have their artists running around the

country on tour, so they don't spend any time writing music for their albums. So there ends up not being enough quality. "I sacrificed a lot of not going on tour. I didn't see the money you make by going out as a successful artist. But I knew that if I had done, how could I have come up with another album? And how could I entertain people with a quality show with only a couple of hits?"

Now Twain is assiduously addressing another burning issue: that of belatedly acquainting Europe with her persuasive blend of country, pop, rock and easy listening. An "international" edition of *Come On Over* is released here next month; meanwhile, the single *You're Still the One* is popping up on radio playlists from Belfast to Whitstable.

"I'll be very disappointed if I don't get going in Europe to some degree with this album," she says. "But I don't expect people just to pick up on it and take it away. You have to earn people's respect."

As many a North American star has found before her, you also have to be careful in these parts about bandying the word "country" around too freely. The continuing labours of Capitol Records to raise the profile in this country of the decade's biggest-selling artist, Garth Brooks, to anything like the one he enjoys in America bear witness to our nervousness about country. A radio programmer who has taken the plunge on Twain's single recalls the pains taken to ensure that no giveaway station appeared on the British sleeve of one Brooks single.

Twain does not believe that problem applies to her, describing her album revamp as an attempt to make a more "universal" record. "Even as it

is originally, the album isn't country sounding, so the point wasn't really to deconstruct the album," she says, although the new version does have noticeably less twang and some more robust beats about it in a reworking completed by the artist with her husband, co-producer and co-writer, "Mutt" Lange.

"A lot of my listeners are crossover listeners. In their CD collection there might be me, there might be Alanis Morissette, Smashing Pumpkins, Mariah Carey... so many listeners are like myself, they listen to a bit of everything."

Twain was born in Windsor, Ontario, and grew up in the Canadian northland town of Timmins. "I really do feel like I've lived a couple of lives," says the 32-year-old. "My musical career started when I was eight years old. I was travelling from town to town, doing clubs, getting paid under the table, inhaling all the second-hand smoke you can possibly imagine and dealing with adults."

If she thought that was tough, worse was to come. When she wasn't working those clubs as a minor, she spent summers working with her father on the reforestation of the local bushland. Then, when she was 21, both her parents were killed in a car crash. Twain, the second oldest of five children, suddenly had some new obligations, and had to put her career ambitions on hold in favour of some paying gigs.

"It was a very difficult time in my life. I had to earn regular money," she says. "I did everything - country, rock, R&B, I even did some cabaret. It just wasn't me; there was no ad-libbing, it was very contrived, lighting cues, sound cues, costume changes, and I had to learn how to dance. I did it to pay the bills, but there was nothing in it that I was ever going to take into my career. I was never going to do *Singing in the Rain* or *La Vie En Rose*. But I figured, 'Once I get through this, I'm really going to go for it.'"

Shania Twain appears on BBC's National Lottery Live tomorrow night. The single *You're Still the One* is released by Mercury on Monday, and the album *Come On Over* on March 9.



Her first name means "I'm on my way". And now Shania Twain is on her way to wow us on *The National Lottery Live*

Believe a band can fly

Now that Unbelievable Truth have enjoyed their first Top 40 hit, with *Higher than Reason*, you would expect a certain degree of curiosity and excitement about them, both inside and outside the industry. But the turnout for the Abingdon group's *Borderline* gig on Wednesday was exceptional, with media tastemakers so thick on the ground that it was a wonder there was any room for ordinary fans to get into the 275-capacity basement.

"I hear the touts are charging £40 for a ticket," singer Andy Yorke said. "I don't think they're worth that much."

Such humility, an uncommon quality among today's pop stars, chimed with the group's seriously downbeat stage presentation. Shirts and haircuts seemed to have been selected for their lack of glamorous appeal, while performance mode involved open

LIVE GIG

Unbelievable Truth
Borderline

mouths, closed eyes and a slight swaying on the spot.

There has been little, so far, in the way of advertising or promotion of the group, and the fact that Andy Yorke is the younger brother of Radiohead's Thom Yorke has been more of a talking than a selling point. So how to explain the buzz?

It's the songs, stupid. Performed with tremendous precision and a profound sense of integrity, numbers such as *Settle Down* and *Same Mistakes* are typical of the special aura surrounding the group. The cascading harmony vocals, supplied by Yorke and drummer Nigel Powell, meshed perfectly with acoustic-rock arrangements that explored extremes of stillness and occasional bombast, recalling the soul-searching intensity of artists such as the late Jeff Buckley or the even later Nick Drake.

A militantly traditional and at times rather self-absorbed and melancholy affair, it reminded me of seeing Counting Crows at this same venue four years ago, and for all the aching beauty of Unbelievable Truth's music, one wonders how long they will be able to hang on to their "accidentally" fashionable cachet.

Then again, as they finished with an especially stirring version of *Solved* and a soaring *Higher than Reason*, the vagaries of fashion seemed irrelevant in the face of songs with such a timeless appeal.

DAVID SINCLAIR

With his new album, Mark Hollis says goodbye forever to his life as a reluctant pop star. Jason Cowley reports

The journey from Talk Talk to listen listen



"I wanted it to become part of the soundscape of the room," Mark Hollis says of *Mark Hollis*

For a musician, Mark Hollis is unusually interested in silence, in the gaps between notes. To listen to the last two albums by Talk Talk, the band he fronted for more than a decade, was to hear a music of fragments and dissolution, his murmured vocals fading into the ether, into nothing. His new, self-titled work extends further what Hollis describes as his fascination with the "geography of sound within which all the instruments exist."

The work has a cathedral hush. Listening carefully you can sometimes hear another kind of music, a sigh, the creak of a guitar stool, the hiss of tape and the shuffle of footsteps: the peripheral sounds of

musicians working together in a room. It's hard to think of anything quite like it.

The record is entirely acoustic. There are long compositions for a woodwind ensemble, loose, jazz-inflected improvisations and skeletal piano, percussion, harmonica, hamonium and acoustic guitar. Listening to Miles Davis's *Sketches of Spain* was famously likened to the experience of walking on eggshells. So with Hollis there is a fragility in his work which runs counter to the white noise of contemporary life.

He sings so quietly and with such trembling hesitancy that it is as if he is inventing his own language as he goes along, pushing at the limits of the sayable. Without a lyric sheet it would be impossible to know what he was singing about; that he is singing songs of faith and devotion.

A shy, wary man, Hollis finds talking about his music difficult. Again and again he flounders against the wall of how to discuss something that defies representation without collapsing into abstraction. Or pretension. For he is genty self-mocking, laughs often and responds to my attempts to offer a reading of his lyrics with "Cor, or something like that."

The motivation for the album, he says, was "to produce a piece of music so that it was impossible to know in which year it was recorded. I have a strong affinity with acoustic sound and with the natural characteristic of instruments. I wanted this to become part of the soundscape of the room. It was recorded very quietly. There were times when, vocally, I felt I could hardly make a sound."

Mark Hollis is his first solo

work since Talk Talk broke up in 1991. The band's journey from being electropop *New Romantics*, stabilmates of Duran Duran, to avant-garde experimentalists in less than a decade has no parallel. Their musical development was smoothed by a fabulous advance from EMI, reward for a series of hit singles on the Continent and in South-East Asia.

Hollis never enjoyed being a conventional pop star. Endless touring bored him, as did the short, sharp songs and the 4/4 pop format. But he is grateful for his early success. "Because we were successful in Europe, with the exception of England, we had absolute freedom in terms of our recording budgets and in retaining a degree of anonymity in this country."

The split with EMI followed the release of *The Spirit of Eden*, a shimmering, devout six-track composition of loose, fragmentary arrangements that prefigured many of the innovations on his new album. The band had already signalled their seriousness with *The Colour of Spring* (1986), a work that, although adventurous, offered no clue of what was to come. For, like all great work, *Spirit* assumed its own form in the very process of composition.

The band's paymasters at EMI were completely baffled. After such investment they expected something, well, more commercial, something they could market aggressively. "We had some kind of split," Hollis says, evasively. Later, he adds: "I think they wanted us to produce something along the lines of our earlier hits. But we felt strongly that we shouldn't repeat ourselves, that we had to keep progressing."

Hollis has spent the past ten

years listening to anything but pop. He cites as influences, among others, Ornette Coleman, Messiaen, Ravel and John Lee Hooker. He lives quietly with his wife, a teacher, and two children in Wimbledon.

like a student whose grant allows him to spend his time reading, listening to and playing music, and getting a bit of sport in. Yeah, it's a good life."

Mark Hollis is released by Polydor

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He's back — Michael Heseltine, the former minister, is working at Haymarket, the publishing company he co-founded and which helped to make his fortune

Minister of trading places

Michael Heseltine, the former Deputy Prime Minister and former President of the Board of Trade, is running for office again — his new office at Haymarket Publishing, the business and consumer magazine publisher he helped to found.

As he approaches his 65th birthday, it is ideas for new Haymarket magazines that Mr Heseltine muses on, rather than dreaming up a new gibe for a political opponent.

"I was in bed and I'd seen something that others are doing and suddenly realised that there was another version that we could do. It must have been in my subconscious for a couple of months," says Mr Heseltine. He now spends as much as three days a week at Haymarket, whose titles include *Campaign*, *Marketing*, *GP Medicine*, *Management Today* and *Autosport*.

He describes himself as a "participating director" and gets involved in everything from the recruitment of key people to opening doors for the company abroad. There will be a new permanent office for him in Haymarket's new headquarters in Hammersmith.

"I always enjoyed publishing and business, and I have now got back to the stage where I enjoy it as much as I ever did," says the man who first entered the House of Commons as MP for Tavistock before moving to the Henley seat in 1973 that he still

Michael Heseltine is back in an old routine, says Raymond Snoddy

represents. He concedes that you can't be 30 years in the front line of politics and not miss it.

"But I think there is a season in the affairs of man, and going back into *Opposition* is not something I think would fulfil my ambitions."

He is talking at his London home near Hyde Park Corner, and though his bus pass beckons he still manages to glide rather than walk up a staircase, even though his famous blond locks are noticeably less dramatic these days.

The political life is still there, of course. Michael Heseltine is on the Millennium Commission and deeply involved in the Greenwich Dome. He is also chairman of Mainstream, a centre-right grouping of Conservatives. But now his emphasis is mostly on Haymarket and publishing — after 30 years when the shares were in trust and he merely saw monthly management accounts.

His re-entry has had to be handled carefully. "I didn't want in any way to upset the extremely effective management structure. They were doing very well without me. So I had to find ways in which I could augment what they were doing. I'm there quite a lot

of the time and I get involved in projects, particularly new ones," says one of the UK's most rumbustious politicians.

The company that he founded with a university friend soon after leaving Oxford now employs more than 850 people, publishes 42 periodicals, seven annuals and runs 13 exhibitions. It has a turnover of £110 million and is the largest privately owned magazine company in Britain. If it were sold it could be worth more than £150 million. Mr Heseltine and his family own 78 per cent of the company.

It all began with a telephone call in 1957. A friend, Clive Labovitch, called to say he had the idea of launching a *Directory of Opportunities* for undergraduates and wanted Michael Heseltine's advice. "Clive asked if I would like to join him, and two years after Oxford I was in publishing," he says. The annual, sent free to final-year students, was profitable from the outset, and quickly led to similar publications for school-leavers, and then for professionals.

"I had no doubt from my Oxford days I would go into politics, so creating a business was very much

part of a concept of making myself financially independent," he says.

Sometimes the magazines were financed by property deals, and sometimes it was the other way around. A key moment was the purchase in 1960 of *Man About Town*, a glossy magazine with high production values that tried to do for men what *Queen*, under Jocelyn Stevens, was doing for women. It finally succumbed to the soft-porn magazines, an area that Haymarket didn't want to get into.

"It was a sort of passport and we were taken seriously because of it. We took that quality into trade and technical publishing. It was an innovative approach," he says.

While he has been away, the Haymarket store has been watched over by Lindsey Masters, who became managing director in 1969 and chairman in 1970, and by Simon Tindall, the managing director. Both worked for the original *Directory of Opportunities*. "I think that the experience, some of it pretty hairy, of starting a business from nothing and seeing it grow gave me a background that proved extremely valuable to me as a minister," Mr Heseltine says. He also takes pride in how well the magazine business is doing in Britain.

For the future, he and Haymarket are concentrating on expanding their

magazines abroad and on brand extension through masthead television — making a television version of an established magazine with its masthead as the title of the programme. He is cross about restrictions in Britain. At the moment masthead television is permitted on cable and satellite but not on terrestrial commercial channels, such as ITV or Channel 4.

"It is extraordinary that we in this country are prejudicing magazine publishers from becoming involved in masthead publishing, which means that the expertise will go abroad," he says.

Mr Heseltine would like to see Haymarket expand internationally but not if it means becoming a public company. "I can't see the point of losing control. We can launch things, we can buy things and we don't have to account to anybody. There's not a whole lot of journalists criticising us. I've had to spend my life in that world," says Mr Heseltine, whose son Rupert is advertising manager for Haymarket's *PR Week*.

"I have a huge sense of pride that one has played a part in this thing. We did it wants and all," he says.

Asked what he thinks Haymarket would be worth if it were ever to come on the market, "It's not on the market and I can't foresee the circumstances. I think is the phrase that comes to mind," says Mr Heseltine in a reference to his old life.

BBC man takes top Czech job

Michael Binyon on a notable tribute to the World Service

A young Czech journalist working for the BBC World Service has been appointed director-general of Czech television. It is an extraordinary tribute to the BBC and underlines the influence it won in Central and Eastern Europe during years of broadcasting to communist countries.

Jakub Puchalsky, 28, a senior journalist at the BBC offices in Prague, takes up the job in April. He will be responsible for two television channels, broadcasting news and entertainment, and takes over one of the liveliest public television services in Eastern Europe. His immediate aim will be to improve news, documentaries and drama, drawing on more than five years' BBC experience.

His training has been almost entirely British. He joined the BBC Czech Service as a producer in 1992, moving to Prague in 1995.

"It has given me professional experience and a clear vision of what public broadcasting should be," he says, "but I don't want to set up a Czech version of the BBC. We are only ten million people, with a different language and traditions."

Czech television, once state-owned, was reconstituted as an independent public broadcasting authority five years ago, and jealously guards its political independence, though many people, especially in the countryside, still believe it is the government service. Mr Puchalsky emphasises the importance of accuracy, objectivity and impartiality in the reporting of politics — values he says he learnt at the BBC.

So far, television has not come under pressure from the Government, but an election is looming and, as Mr Puchalsky said: "This could be a question in the months and years to come."

Bush House sees his appointment as a tribute to the influence of the World

'I don't want to set up a Czech version of the BBC'

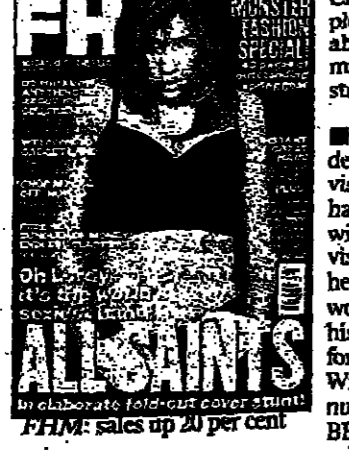
Service. Post-communist Eastern Europe has embraced the BBC with fervour. It is now the only "outsider" rebroadcast by Slovak radio. In Hungary it supplies programmes for a local and national network and has negotiated a re-broadcasting agreement. The BBC has joined Polish investors in securing a frequency in Warsaw. And it will soon be announced that the head of the BBC Polish service has been offered a post in Warsaw.

The Czech Republic has been especially receptive. The BBC has joined Deutsche Welle and the Voice of America in compiling programmes for a Czech radio network. It has also hired a 24-hour programme frequency for broadcasts in English and Czech in Prague, Brno and other big cities. And it supplies news bulletins to private stations around the country.

Much of the BBC reputation is based on its moderation at the height of the Cold War. "We were never seen as a Cold War broadcaster," says Andrew Taussig, the director of the World Service regions. The BBC's selling point is that it was always seen as a British broadcaster, rather than an international organisation. Its reputation gained credibility because it criticised British policy as well as communism.

Mr Puchalsky comes to a television service that has seen a post-communist revolution. Many of the old faces — and some were very old — have gone, replaced by Western-oriented, highly educated professional broadcasters. His own name, he admits, is probably known only to those who listen to the BBC — mainly to urban intellectuals. He has the advantage of being an outsider, not associated with any faction in the former state-run service. But the greater advantage was clearly the BBC. And he is happy to acknowledge the debt.

■ **LADS** remain dominant in the magazine world with women's titles beaten into submission. ABC figures released today are expected to show *FHM* magazine has increased sales by 20 per cent to more than 600,000 a month, ahead of all other men's and women's magazines in the monthlies market. Although some leading women's titles have put on sales, experts say the growth area is in raunch and laddish humour rather than fashion and relationships.



■ **SIMON NYE**, Britain's prolific comedy writer, flew into London from Los Angeles for just one day to launch his new comedy drama, *How Do You Want Me?* Sharp-eyed viewers can catch a glimpse of shy Nye in the BBC2 series as a narrator postman. The comedy centres on the culture clash which erupts when a townie transplants to the country, but may

Lads beat off women

faller in the ratings (it starts on February 24) because of Nye's odd insistence on casting the *dishty* stand-up Irish comic Dylan Moran as the lead — his first television drama role. Nye is also devising three final episodes for *Men Behaving Badly* — "Well, they are getting a bit old now" — while *Is It Legal?*, his sitcom dropped by ITV, has just been snatched up by Channel 4. In LA, he's completing a new sitcom for NBC about a vet who hates animals, a subject surely too strong for British tastes.

■ **DAVID DOCHERTY**, the deputy director of BBC Television, is teased because he has risen so far, so fast, without even making a television programme. But I hear he has taken the week off to work on *The Spirit's Death*, his (hoped-for) blockbuster for Simon & Schuster. Wrong, it's not about the numbing effect of the Birtist BBC. Set in the Amazonian rainforest, Docherty charts the spread of a terrible airborne disease. A far cry from previous worthy books, *Running the Show* (a history of LWT sponsored by the then director of programmes, John Birt) and *Keeping Faith*, about Channel 4 and its audience. Well, you can't spend years scheduling BBC1 without a populist touch.

■ **SEPTEMBER FILMS**,



whose hit *Truth About Women* ended last night is pitching to make a special *Truth About Football* for ITV to coincide with the World Cup. David Green, the managing director, tells me: "All the celebrities have their teeth it's the one subject they queue up to talk about."

■ **GLEE** in the media that Rosie Boycott has allowed camera crews in to film her takeover of *The Independent* for Channel 4, something that the ousted Andrew Marr refused. "She was probably too busy socialising to see *The*

■ **DURING** Marcelle d'Argy Smith's long reign at *Cosmopolitan*, the magazine devoted itself to ensuring that British women had orgasms. So how are her efforts at turning around the staid *Woman's Journal* shaping up? More subtle than might be expected. The March issue asks "Are you an ostrich about your pension?", while a booklet on natural remedies urges readers to "be calmer, fitter,

stress-free". No sign of the "O" word anywhere.

"People are seized out," she says. "You just can't play the old sex trick, it's boring. That shock thing belongs to the early 1990s. I know some readers thought, oh God, that woman from *Cosmo* will wreck it. I won't." She says her real battle is to "educate advertisers about the spending power of older women." And this issue's special offer: "The essential raincoat."

■ **The Time... The Place...** cruel news surfaced this week that ITV's morning talk show outgunned by the BBC's Robert Kilroy-Silk is being killed off at the end of March. This, I hear, is only the first of many dumpings, as the network struggles to reverse its ratings slide.

But what or who is going to replace presenter John Stapleton and those worthy discussions?

Several options are under debate. One is that Vanessa Feltz's more touchy-feely chat show, *Vanessa*, moves to the morning, from the afternoon.



Gentle touch: Vanessa

But more likely ITV's daytime supreme, Dianne Nelmes, on secondment from setting up Granada's Good Life channel, will transplant a breezy mix of cookery, food, shopping, gardening and style programmes.

She is thought to believe that studio talk shows — with roving male presenters combing the audience — have had their day. Watch out Kilroy!

THE TIMES DILLONS SCIENCE FORUM

The scientists and our future

FOUR OF THE WORLD'S leading scientists will debate the vital subject "Why science matters" at a Times/Dillons forum on March 5 at 8pm. The experts are Professor Susan Greenfield, Professor of Pharmacology at Oxford; Professor Sir Roger Penrose, Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford; Professor Sir Martin Rees, the Royal Astronomer; and Dr John Gribbin, Visiting Fellow in Astronomy at the University of Sussex.

Discussing the impact of science on our lives and our future, and exploring extraordinary scientific breakthroughs, the distinguished team will also give insights into the main influences in their work.

Chaired by Melvyn Bragg, the forum at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1E, marks the publication of Bragg's new book, *On Giant's Shoulders — Great Scientists and their Discoveries from Archimedes to DNA* (Hodder & Stoughton, £12.99). The admission price of £10 (concessions £7.50) includes £2 of the price of the book.

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Marcelle d'Argy Smith: operating in an O-free zone

Viewers put Bruce in the dock

Virginia Matthews on campaigns prized for their 'groanworthiness'

Brue Forsyth, who dons a judge's wig for his starring role in the long-running television campaign for Courts Furnishers, has been sentenced to no less than two booby prizes for his contribution to what one awards scheme calls "the growing tide of groanworthy advertising".

Named as a top contender in TV Quick magazine's "Worst Ad of the Year" poll — alongside the Daz Doorstep Challenge and the Always Ultra sanpro commercials, with their "dry-weave top sheet" — Bruce was put in the dock for a second time just days later when the £12 million Courts campaign was named runner-up in Marketing magazine's "Most Annoying Ad of the Year" survey.

Twenty-three per cent of viewers quizzed for the NOP/Marketing survey accused Bruce's slapstick judge routine of wilfully causing annoyance, making him rather less irritating than the Spice Girls/Walker's crisps tie-up, which provoked 33 per cent of the 1,000 research sample, but rather more infuriating than the Man from the Pru, named by 5 per cent. of the Mr and



In trouble: Bruce Forsyth's ad for Courts Furnishers was judged one of the most annoying

Courts name and Price Promise have achieved what the firm claims are unrivalled awareness figures among Britain's potential furniture buyers, most of whom, says the company, remain "mid-market" rather than ABC1. At the same time, the firm's former British focus has expanded to a 200-store presence in 18 countries.

Chris Coote, Courts's director of marketing, says: "Bruce Forsyth is a national institution who is loved by many people but inevitably there are those who don't like his brand of humour. The

campaign he stars in has been incredibly successful for this company so I see no reason to be ashamed of it. It's not clever-clever, but it is amusing."

For Collett Dickenson Pearce, whose work — Hovis, Heineken, Hamlet — has often been populist, if a little more subtle than Forsyth, the two-year "Judge" campaign is showing no signs of wear-out.

"Many companies forget whom they are actually selling to and make the mistake of living in an ivory tower in which all the consumers are fantastically upmarket," says Chris Macleod, CDP's managing director. "But Courts

does not fall into that trap."

He adds: "Bruce Forsyth is a top-rate entertainer with great appeal among our target audience. As a well-established funny man, he has a large say in the scripts — he wouldn't agree to do them if he didn't feel they were amusing — and as you can see from the company's recent results, the vast majority of consumers do not appear to find him either irritating or off-putting."

If Forsyth fails to raise a titter in certain quarters, then so do many other furniture ads currently on the box. Runner-up in the TV Quick survey of television's worst ads was Courts's rival, DFS.

Tony Loughran, the safety adviser for BBC News, says: "Of course, we all hope this can be settled through diplomacy, but if it isn't, we need to be as prepared as we can be. In an air strike, bunker-busting bombs are supposed to vapourise everything stored inside them — but if they don't, people could be at risk, and we have to do all we can to minimise the danger."

News crews prepare for war

BBC spokesman says 47 staff have attended, or are due to go on, a nuclear, biological and chemical defence course run by Centurion: 40 more — from ITN, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Ireland's RTE — have also signed up. Ms Adie is heading for

HMS Invincible, where she will report direct via satellite. Steve Newland, the director of Centurion, says: "In the Gulf you are in danger from four types of gas — blood, blister, nerve and choking agents. Nerve gas is the most lethal: you die in seconds."

Some broadcasters are just sending kits out to the Gulf. They don't realise things such as gas masks have to be individually fitted — and you need to be able to do it yourself. At £280 each, the bill to the BBC is more than £13,000.

How I overcame my techno fear at last

Journalists are notorious Luddites when it comes to actually using new technology, even sometimes those who specialise in writing about the wonders of scientific development. I have even come across distinguished journalists who never managed to feel comfortable with the typewriter, although for some reason they seemed to like word processors better.

As a breed, British journalists have been notoriously slow to come to terms with the Internet. They know what it is, of course, and could probably dash out an article on its implications for the future of communications, but as for actually using it...

In recent months the embarrassment has started to show. "You mean you haven't got e-mail," say the American voices on the telephone with incredulity, and you ask with increasing diffidence if a press release could be faxed. Regular talks on the future of communications with Russian journalists visiting the BBC for a crash course on the British media have also turned out to be embarrassing.

The Russians, almost without exception, have been using the Internet and e-mail as a basic tool for years. A mixture of techno-fear, complacency and the continued use of many computers of circa Wapping vintage — that is, without Internet capability — has tended to hold the British journalist back. The arrival of a sprinkling of modern PCs with Internet links in newspaper offices has not been quite enough to transform the culture.

Partly, it is a generational change. Young journalists sit happily surfing the Web on their laptops. Until two weeks ago I, too, was a middle-aged journalistic Luddite hugging his fax machine and muttering the Internet was a waste of time. The moment of transformation happened on Tuesday morning. There, with the milk bottles at the front door, was a brown cardboard package. My first book ordered through the Internet had arrived. It was pretty much an experiment.

In a speech in London last year Michael Lynton, the head of Penguin, said that Amazon.com, the Internet book store, was now accounting for about 80 per cent of his company's backlist sales in the United States. Clearly something of importance was going on. Faced with the challenge of finding a book on the origins of the universe requested by my son, I gave it a whirl. Up

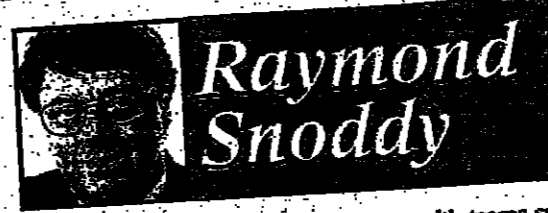
popped Amazon.com, with its 25 million listed titles and there was the one I wanted, complete with details and summary. A minute later the transaction was done on my screen by credit card. And there it was on my doorstep ten days later.

Blackwells might have been cheaper, but nonetheless my first personal test of the transactional power of the Internet had worked. There was much better to come. A guerrilla Internet journalist named Matt Drudge was starting to get publicity earlier this month for breaking the Clinton/Lewinsky story. Type in the word Drudge in the search engine and there it was — all the scuttlebutt on the leader of the free world. Is it any wonder that even Lord Gnome, that most traditional of press proprietors at Private Eye, should this month have taken the plunge and gone on the Internet.

But the best was yet to come. A quick click on to the official Queens Park Rangers Web site and there it was — your own personal Internet radio station carrying continuous commentary of QPR's away games (admittedly a minority taste). No need to listen again for hours to Radio 5. Live as it pursued its fixation with teams such as Manchester United and Arsenal in order to get a second or two's update on the only game that matters.

In the next few weeks *The Times* is moving from its former Victorian rum warehouse — a listed building without much in the way of natural light — to modern, airy headquarters and everybody is going to get their own e-mail address. Or as the conversation between one journalist and a contact went: "We're going to get windows you know," said the journalist. "Windows 95?" "No. Windows."

Getting an e-mail address does, of course, present many dilemmas. The principal one is — do you tell people what it is? Smart American executives who are a long way ahead of the British in terms of the realities of Internet use, are starting to take their e-mail address off their business cards. It's the only way to avoid having your computer clogged with hundreds of junk e-mails from all over the world. Perhaps the answer lies in having an ex-directory e-mail address, or one that is whispered in strictest confidence only to the closest friends and to maintain credibility to Russian journalists.



Raymond Snoddy

The subj
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TELEVISION news teams are undergoing emergency chemical warfare training to prepare them for war in the Gulf, writes Carol Midgley.

The BBC's John Simpson and Kate Adie and ITN's Bill Neely and Tim Ewart have completed the courses. They have been issued with protective clothing, respirators and filters to protect them from germ or chemical leakages. A

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The subject is the oodle, the filthy lucre, the pot of Russian gold

Michael Cockerell recalls how Enoch Powell would not give an interview without talking money

Enoch Powell was a master of the media. You would never leave an interview with him empty-handed. But his words did not come cheap. As a dedicated prophet of market economics, Powell liked to practise what he preached when negotiating his fee.

In 1980, he agreed to do a TV interview about Michael Foot, who had just been elected Labour Leader and had sometimes been a political collaborator with Powell.

As I was about to start, Powell said: "Nay, nay, nay. There is a subject we have not mentioned."

"And what is that?"

"The oodle, the filthy lucre, the pot of Russian gold," he said. I replied, rather firmly, that I was not intended to negotiate a fee and there was a special contract arrangement with which he should deal.

"I am aware of that, but I am sure that you will be able to persuade me to accept a special contract arrangement," he said. "I believe that you could have an impact."

So what are you suggesting, I asked. The answer was a person. "On this subject, Powell on Michael Foot must be worth a hundred guineas of anyone's money."

This was at least double what he would normally have been paid, but his calculation of his worth was accepted by the contracts department.

He had shown he was a natural broadcaster from his first BBC radio appearance in 1950. Soon after becoming an MP, he presented *The West in Westminster*. In a confidential assessment, his producer wrote: "An outstanding, brilliant account, showing a penetrating and original shrewdness of observation. Brisk, rather harsh Midlands voice — not the least bit cosy. Professes never to listen to the wireless, yet knows how to write a script and how to address a microphone."

The polyglot Powell became a regular broadcaster in Urdu for the BBC's Overseas Service. When he queried a fee for one broadcast, he was informed that the BBC had a special rate which added a guinea to the standard fee of five guineas for a talk "if the speaker is an MP and speaks in a foreign language".

In 1955, Powell and the young Anthony Wedgwood Benn were joint presenters of BBC radio's nightly party programme *Let's Talk*. Powell's habit of wearing his glasses and sitting sideways at the conference table, he commented, "but I believe that you could have an impact."

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Stickler for detail — Powell, as Minister of Health, puts bounce into a campaign in 1962, watched by his family

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Europe slams the brake on macho car ads

Virginia Matthews on a new code planned to curb the motor mouths

Car advertisements that highlight speed rather than safety and encourage "dangerously macho driving" face a clampdown. With about 45,000 fatalities on Europe's roads each year, the average European Union citizen has a higher chance of dying on the road than his counterpart in America or Australia.

Now the European Commission is calling for tougher controls on car marketing throughout the EU. It will publish a new voluntary code of conduct for all car advertisers and their ad agencies. The Commission's target includes copy such as "the car does 0-60 in a blistering 7.2 seconds" in a recent press ad for the Citroën Saxo, or "it continues to thrill you as it hurtles towards a top speed of 153mph", contained in a recent mailing for the new Fiat coupe.

Both ads were attacked as unacceptable by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). Safety campaigners recognise that road deaths are the result of a combination of problems — including alcohol, drugs, no safety belts, badly designed cars and even inherently unsafe roads. They claim that as many as one third of all road fatalities are caused mainly by excessive speed and, ultimately, by a culture that equates speed with thrills. The marketing community, they say, plays a significant role in reckless driving.

Brussels believes that the current regulations have failed to rein in a number of car manufacturers, which continue to fantasise consumers with promises of high speed.

"Despite resistance in the past, we now have the agreement of all 15 states that undue emphasis on speed in car ads helps to contribute to road deaths," says Graeme Preston, a senior commission administrator specialising in transport issues. "We have to convince certain makers that a European code is desirable, and will save lives."

At present, each member state has its own rules on car speed claims. Despite having among the toughest regulations in the EU, here the ASA and the Independent Television Commission (ITC) have in recent months both had a series of clashes with car manufacturers. One involved a television ad for a Volkswagen Passat that featured a drive on a test circuit, laid out to look like a public road, with animated crash-test dummies playing the part of pedestrians. The "hazards" were a "child" running out from behind an ice-cream van, a "woman" in a bikini who distracted his attention from the road, and a "mother" pushing her pram across a zebra crossing. In each case, the driver, travelling at speed, had to swerve round the "pedestrians" or brake hard to avoid hitting them.

The ad, which prompted more than 40 complaints to the ITC as well as protests from the Department of Transport, was banned on the grounds that it appeared to condone "aggressive, irresponsible driving".

The ASA's code specifically forbids car ads that encourage "antisocial behaviour" or "portray speed in a way that might encourage motorists to drive irresponsibly or break the law".

Christopher Reed, a spokesman for the ASA, says: "We saw a very unwelcome return to excessive speed claims in car adverts last year. The adoption of a new EU-wide code would considerably strengthen our hand."

The Commission is likely to appease fears of legal restrictions by making the code voluntary, although manufacturers attempting to breach it will face having their ads withdrawn.

Françoise Perucki of the Bureau de Vérification de la Publicité — the French equivalent of the ASA — believes that "after decades of being associated with mad driving, the French, for example, are now a lot better behaved on the roads".

Florence Ranson — the secretary-general of the Brussels-based European Advertising Tripartite, which represents advertisers, agencies and the media — says: "We are certainly willing to co-operate with a code of practice on this issue."

"We recognise that it is in our interests to do so. But we are united that such a code should be voluntary. Advertising is one element of the road safety problem in Europe, but we refuse to carry the can for all of it."

Up to one third of road deaths are caused by speed

A Number One? It's all in the jeans



Stiff competition: Jeremy Sisto remains unruffled in the latest Levi's ad

NOTHING in adland compares with the launch of a new Levi's 501 commercial. It is anticipated eagerly by the fashion, music, modelling and advertising industries whose fortunes can depend on its success.

Ever since John Hegarty, Bartle Bogle Hegarty's creative director, persuaded Nick Kamen to walk into a launderette, take off his 501s and put them in the machine to the strains of Marvin Gaye's *I Heard it through the Grapevine*, the campaign has been a cultural phenomenon.

That was 1985. BBH had held the account for two years when Hegarty hit on the then radical idea of setting the ad to an original soundtrack. He turned to Sixties soul music to draw on the brand's roots in America.

Success was instant. "Launderette" caught the mood of the times, and Levi Strauss shifted 800,000 pairs of 501s on the back of it in what had been a flat UK market. Over the next decade the company enjoyed a 15 per cent increase in volume sales and an amazing 1,300 per cent increase for 501s.

Its cultural influence was extraordinary. *Grapevine* reached number eight in the charts, and Sam Cooke's *Wonderful World* from "Bath" made it to number two in 1986. In 1987 Ben E. King's *Stand by Me*, used in "Entrance" (Eddie Kid gets into a nightclub wearing black jeans), was Levi's first number one. Soon record companies were begging the agency to plunder their back catalogues in the search for the next new thing.

Since 1985, Levi Strauss has enjoyed 11 Top Ten hits, including number ones for the Steve Miller Band's *The Joker* (1990), the Clash's *Should I Stay or Should I Go?* (1991), Siltkin's *Inside* (1994), Shaggy's *Boombastic* (1995) and Babylon Zoo's *Spaceman* (1996). The campaign has helped to make many models' and actors' careers. Among others were Eddie Kidd in black jeans (1987); Tatjana Patitz taking 501s out of the fridge (1988); yuppie dealer Angie Everhardt throwing off her power miniskirt to climb on to a Harley (1990); and Brad Pitt getting out of jail (1991).

It means BBH can drive a hard bargain when hiring talent, so ads that should have cost £500,000, might be half that. Shooting a Levi's spot helped to make such directors as Tony Scott and Michel Gondry.

This success is built on taking as many risks as a mainstream advertiser dare, both in plot lines and directing techniques. Levi Strauss has also managed consistently to stay a step ahead of the next trend.

We have seen a transvestite (1995), teenagers buying condoms (1995), kung fu (1997) and a model in her underwear suggestively taunting a supposedly blind man (1996). And we have heard the non-commercial likes of B.B. King, Screamin' Jay Hawkins, Johnny Cash and the Nine Inch Nails. Which other advertiser takes such gambles?

Flops can be counted on the fingers of one hand: Tony Scott's "Beach" (1990), set to the irredeemably naïf *Bad Company*; 1994's hunk falling off an oil rig; and 1996's "Riveted", with two escaped convicts on the run. Levi Strauss also made a mistake in deciding on a cinema-only campaign in 1996. Awareness slumped and ads were soon back on the small screen.

The "Planet" ad in 1996 transformed sales of 501s to women. Its secret, like all Levi Strauss's best ads, was to keep product attributes at the heart of the commercial. The jeans usually star — even if it is done so subtly that we don't notice. Ads have been about rivets, fifth pockets, shrinking to fit, repeat washing (from my 1992 favourite, "Swimmer") and washing inside out.

The new ad is about how cool and stiff the jeans are when unwashed. It is set in South Central Los Angeles and features the usual designer-stubbled hunk keeping his cool while all around him — including the inevitable admiring babe — panic in an earthquake.

It marks a return to the classic boy-meets-girl scenario of the more populist ads in the series. The hunk, Jeremy Sisto, was in *Clueless* and the director, Doug Liman, shot the cult movie *Swingers*. However, the ad's creators, BBH's Will Awdry and Rosie Arnold (who also devised "Dealing Room"), would have been nervous as hell when the ad first aired during Tuesday's Brit Awards coverage.

Not only is there an expectation that every Levi's ad will be brilliant, but the company itself is under more pressure. Sales in America have slumped amid fierce competition. Having been forced to lay off a third of its workforce, Levi Strauss then fired FCB, its US agency for the past six decades.

The brand is not under quite the same pressure in Britain. Brits remain happy to pay £40 to buy the advertising image. And, predictably, this commercial hits the spot. Its edge lies not in the script or direction but in the marriage of the film with Prince Buster's wonderfully sexy reggae soundtrack.

It probably won't win armfuls of advertising awards, but the public will love it. Levi Strauss will sell even more 501s. And that, lest we forget, is the point of the exercise.

Stefano Hatfield is the Editor of Campaign



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CHANGING TIMES

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British talent, American money: the hugely successful *The Full Monty* was rejected for funding by both the Arts Council and Channel 4

Give us the full monty

British talent will certainly be celebrated at the Oscars this year but, as usual, films backed by Britain are few and far between. Despite the fanfare surrounding the National Lottery funding of film studio franchises when it was announced in May, the Government's initiative to boost the industry will have a marginal effect at best.

The lottery funding of three consortiums to the tune of £32 million — approximately £5 million per studio for six years — gives the impression of a big commitment, but the amount is small and spread too thin.

The then Government must have intended to help creative film-makers to establish themselves in a business dominated by a few big players with control of distribution.

A film needs a distribution deal to be seen in cinemas. Without one, there is no way

British films may be world-beaters, but the way we fund them is a mess, says Mark Andrews

for the producers to recoup the costs. To get a distribution deal, producers also usually have to surrender all or most of their rights and therefore their potential earnings.

For example, although widely considered "British", *The Full Monty* was rejected for funding by both the Arts Council and Channel 4. It was backed by the American studio Fox Searchlight.

In order to win a lottery franchise, applicants had to demonstrate they had access to distribution outlets. This seems superficially sensible: according to the British Film Institute, "of 78 British films made three years ago, 17 have no distribution deal and seven are still awaiting a release date although they do have a deal". But the result has been that the

money is "safely" allocated to consortiums that already have large foreign backers.

Also, the cash has not been allocated to an aspiring artist or dance group. Instead it is in the form of an "investment", where repayment of the principal sum plus a share of profits will be due. The consortiums could have gone to a bank.

The way the lottery money is being used is typical British fudging. The committee responsible should either say that the money is there to support works of merit, or it should say it is investing in a commercial product. If it is the latter, what is the morality of using lottery funds?

But, even with guaranteed distribution, the most important thing is to produce films that the public want to see.

Commercial products will get made with or without lottery money. There is no lack of financial backing, rather a scarcity of scripts worth backing. American film-makers understand this better than the British. Their domination of the film industry is largely because they make top-quality products that sell well in foreign markets.

In America, films are seen as an entertainment product. That some pieces of great artistic merit are made as well as purely commercial ones is a testament to the integrity and determination of the producer or director, as well as to the bravery and good taste of a studio head (usually independently) who decides to do it. Generally, their eyes are set on the commercial viability of the

product first and creative accolades second. In Britain, the attitudes seem to be the opposite. It is "art" first and commercial considerations second, which tends to make it hard to stay in business.

Surely one effective way to employ lottery money would be to invest in a distribution system independent of the current cartel — film theatres for British films — rather than into films that would be made anyway elsewhere with somebody else's money. Such theatres could become centres of creativity for the arts across the regions. This would benefit producers, directors and writers working outside the arts establishment. The French have Maisons de la Culture nationwide — why shouldn't we?

Mark Andrews is managing director of Tsunami Films, Britis Award winners for the All Saints video.

Why Saturday's all right for fighting

Saturday newspapers are the big battleground of 1997 and sales figures for January will show that they are again outselling the Sundays, according to newspaper managers.

With up to two million extra newspapers sold on Saturdays, crucial skirmishes are being fought in all newspaper sectors. Under its new managing director, Kelvin MacKenzie, *The Mirror* is fighting back against *The Sun* — once edited by MacKenzie — and trying to avoid being overtaken by the *Daily Mail*, which also seeks to crush *The Express*, while *The Times* aims to close in on *The Daily Telegraph*. All the other newspapers are fighting to hold their ground as the rival armies swirl around them.

Yet the sales records will almost certainly show that the effect of the investment in bigger Saturday editions or reader giveaways has been to expand the market, with sales (excluding those for the *Financial Times*) up from about 2.5 million last

November to about 3.1 million last month, an increase of 300,000 in an allegedly declining industry.

Two newspapers have been particularly successful. When the *Daily Mail* launched a Saturday partwork on the life of Diana, Princess of Wales, sales rose by 415,000 and have stayed at 3.2 million or higher for three weeks. That is a million higher than the *Mail's* daily average and demonstrates why Saturday matters.

Selling at 20p and with a new colour magazine, Saturday sales of *The Times* rose by almost 300,000, to 1.1 million, and remained at almost a million last Saturday when the cover price rose to 40p.

When the Audit Bureau of Circulations publishes its January report today the result for *The Times* is expected to be an average January daily sale of about 940,000, the second-highest in its history and establishing the narrowest ever gap between *The Times* and its main rival, *The Daily Telegraph*. The result for the *Daily Mail* will be a daily sale of about 2,275,000 — its highest since the early 1950s.

As well as revamping the magazine, *The Times* since last autumn has also launched its *Metro* and *Vision* sections and relaunched its children's section. The *Saturday Telegraph* responded with new sport, travel and personal finance sections and has held sales at more than 1.2 million.



Brian MacArthur

On Saturdays the two bumper newspapers now rival the biggest Sunday broadsheets. There were nine sections, with a total of 166 pages, in *The Times* (measured in broadsheet size) and a 100-page magazine broadsheet size) and a 100-page magazine broadsheet size) and ten sections in *The Daily Telegraph*, which had 164 pages and a 92-page magazine. They are so big and heavy that mine are tied with string and left on the doorstep. Even one of them would have to be taken apart to get it through the letterbox.

And the answer to the question constantly asked by puzzled students of the press — do readers really want such big papers? — is yes, they do. The biggest Sunday newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, outsells its two main rivals combined and on Saturday *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* outsell the other three broadsheets. Value for money seems to be what sells, especially for the newspapers that cater for all ages and all cultural tastes even if readers discard the sections that do not interest them.

The Mirror is the newspaper that journalists are watching. It has sharpened its act and is offering fiercer opposition to *The Sun*. One example was editor Piers Morgan's

Mohamed Al Fayed scoop yesterday, even though it mostly recycled a story told in *The Times* a day earlier.

The Mirror's big tactic was a Money Bag promotion offering £5 to £50 notes inside the paper. It was an instant but brief success. Sales rose by more than 250,000 on the first Saturday, only to be all but lost the following week when *The Sun* started a rival Moneybags promotion offering up to £125,000 in notes or cheques.

The Mirror succeeded, however, in fending off the *Daily Mail* for another month, although it was notable last week when it raised its Saturday price to 32p (against 30p for *The Sun*), that it declared *The Mirror* offered "much more" than the *Daily Mail* and *The Express*. So that's where it sees the opposition.

The Daily Mail was not the only newspaper that achieved a sales lift from a special on Diana, Princess of Wales. When the *News of the World* published a 24-page magazine investigation last month, sales rose by 307,000, to 4.6 million. It is obvious that nearly six months after the Paris crash, there remains a still-unsated appetite for the truth — if it can ever be uncovered — about the circumstances surrounding the death of the Princess.

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No extra conditional fee risk for lawyers

Hodgson and Others v Imperial Tobacco Ltd and Others
Before Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Aldous and Lord Justice Chadwick
[Judgment February 12]

The risk that a lawyer acting under a conditional fee agreement would be ordered to pay the costs of an action personally was no different from that of lawyers engaged under any other fee arrangement. Therefore, a judge was right to refuse to make an order debarring three defendant tobacco companies from seeking costs personally from lawyers acting under conditional fee agreements for 43 plaintiffs seeking damages for cancer.

Proceedings in chambers were held in private to assist in the efficient disposal of litigation but, except in exceptional circumstances, disclosure of judgments or orders made in chambers and comments on what happened during such proceedings was not improper.

The best way of avoiding ill informed comments in the media in a case with high public interest was for the court to be as open as possible and practicable, not only in relation to the trial but also in relation to the interlocutory proceedings prior to that trial.

The Court of Appeal so held in a reserved judgment allowing in part the appeal of the plaintiffs, John Barrie Hodgson and 42 others, against interlocutory decisions of Mr Justice Popplewell in the Queen's Bench Division on October 10, 1997 in an action against the defendant tobacco companies, Imperial Tobacco Ltd, Gallaher Ltd and Hergell (1981) Ltd (in liquidation) for damages for cancer.

The decisions appealed were:
1 The refusal to grant an order debarring the defendants from seeking any order that the plaintiffs' legal representatives be responsible for any and all of the costs of the action other than under section 51(6) of the Supreme Court Act 1981 and Order 62, rule 11 of the Rules of the Supreme Court and
2 An order that, although directions made by the court could be released to the press, the parties

and their advisers were not to make any comments to the media in relation to the litigation without the leave of the court.

Mr Daniel Brennan, QC, Mr Robin Oppenheim and Mr Richard Hermer for the plaintiffs; Mr Jonathan Playford, QC, Mr Anthony Fryde, QC and Mr Toby Riley-Smith for the first and second defendants; Mr Justin Fenwick, QC, Miss Janet Turner, QC and Mr Thomas Weitzman for the third defendant.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS, giving the judgment of the court, said that the plaintiffs were able to bring the actions because they had entered into conditional fee agreements with their legal advisers.

It was apparent that the defendants had very much in mind that, in due course, they could decide to seek an order for costs making the plaintiffs' solicitors personally liable for the defendants' costs.

Any risk that the plaintiffs' legal advisers might be liable for costs personally was a matter of informed concern to them. They indicated that unless they had certainty as to any liability it would not be possible for them to continue to represent the plaintiffs.

It was for that reason that they sought the debarring order on costs. They contended that they had been adequately advised by leading counsel as to the propriety of the conditional fee agreement arrangements which had been made and were entitled to know where they stood as to the costs in such litigation.

The statutory authority for conditional fee agreements was provided by the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990. The Conditional Fee Agreements Regulations (SI 1995 No 1675) stated that an agreement would not be a conditional fee agreement unless it complied with certain requirements.

Except that a conditional fee agreement enabled solicitors and counsel to enter into an agreement which they would not otherwise be able to make, the existence of such an agreement did not alter the relationship between the legal adviser and his client.

The fact that there was a conditional fee agreement could not justify the legal adviser coming to any additional or collateral arrangement which would not be permissible if there was no conditional fee agreement.

There was no reason why the circumstances in which a lawyer, acting under a conditional fee agreement, could be made personally liable for the costs of a party other than his client should differ from those in which a lawyer who was not acting under a conditional fee agreement would be so liable.

The existence of a conditional fee agreement should make a legal adviser's position as a matter of law no worse, so far as being ordered to pay costs was concerned, than it would be if there was no conditional fee agreement. That was unless, of course, the conditional fee agreement was outside the statutory protection.

Even if it would otherwise be appropriate to grant a debarring order, any debarring order which it would be proper for a court to grant would not provide the plaintiffs' legal advisers with any practical protection.

The order which the judge was asked to make was nullified so that it would not debar the defendants from making a wasted costs order under section 51(6) of the Supreme Court Act 1981.

The plaintiffs, in accepting that qualification, recognised that legal advisers were capable of being guilty of conduct any time which could make an application for a wasted costs order appropriate. If that were to happen it would be highly undesirable for the court to have granted what would be, in effect, advance immunity.

The parties agreed that the court had a limited additional jurisdiction to make an order for costs against legal advisers personally:

- 1 The court's inherent jurisdiction to make such an order, at least against solicitors and
- 2 The general jurisdiction of the court as to costs contained in section 51(6) and
- 3 Of the Supreme Court Act 1981.

For the very same reason that the plaintiffs conceded that the debarring order would have to be qualified so as to exclude the further heads of jurisdiction, although they were unlikely to arise in practice.

That being the position, the debarring order would be an empty vessel because it would have to be qualified so as to exclude the only grounds upon which a court could make an order.

Order restricting comment to the media

The proceedings involved a number of plaintiffs whose individual situations attracted great sympathy. The defendants were,

however, entitled to have the issues involved determined by the courts without improper interference with the administration of justice.

The defendants had relied on the fact that the interlocutory directions were made in chambers in support of the order restricting communications between legal advisers and the media.

However, as section 12 of the Administration of Justice Act 1960 made clear, the publication of information relating to proceedings held in private, that is, in chambers, was not in itself contempt except in the specific cases identified in section 12(1) unless the court made an order prohibiting publication when it had power to do so. Nor was the publication of the whole or part of the order made by a court sitting in private a contempt.

In relation to hearings in chambers the position could be summarised as follows:

- 1 The public had no right to attend hearings in chambers because of the nature of the work transacted in chambers and because of the physical restrictions on the room available but, if requested, permission should be granted to attend when and to the extent that that was practical.

2 What happened during the proceedings in chambers was not confidential or secret and information about what occurred in chambers and the judgment or order pronounced could, and in the case of any judgment or order should be made available to the public when requested.

3 The members of the public who sought to attend could not be accommodated, the judge should consider adjourning the proceedings in whole or in part into open court to the extent that that was practical or allowing one or more representatives of the press to attend the hearing in chambers.

4 To disclose what occurred in chambers did not constitute a breach of confidence or amount to contempt as long as any comment which was made did not substantially prejudice the administration of justice.

5 The position summarised above did not apply to the exceptional situations identified in section 12(1) of the 1960 Act or where the court, with the power to do so, ordered otherwise.

3 The normal protection of the administration of justice was to be found in the law of contempt. To rely on the law of contempt for that purpose had the disadvantage that what did or did not amount to contempt could not be identified with precision before all the circumstances were investigated.

The advantage of the law of contempt in preference to the precise order made by the judge was that upon an application to commit for contempt, the court was required to weigh the conflicting

public interests involved. Those interests included not only the need to protect the administration of justice but also the importance of not interfering with freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.

While their Lordships would much prefer lawyers not to become engaged in commenting about proceedings to the press, as opposed to communicating facts, they considered that in the present case the risk, if any, of the administration of justice being interfered with by communications with the press were far less than the risks which would follow from interference with the establishment of the media to obtain information about the proceedings.

The defendants might find what was said to the media objectionable, but their Lordships did not accept that they would be deterred from defending the proceedings because of adverse publicity which could be generated by those comments.

The problem with the order was that it achieved certainty by imposing rigidity. Whether there had been contempt or not was to be determined by the order which would become the test for contempt instead of whether there had been unjustified interference with the administration of justice. To produce that result was wrong in principle and the order should not have been made.

In such litigation it was difficult if not impossible for the court to seek to prevent direct or indirect communication with the media. In the present case the court should not have attempted to do so.

The best way of avoiding ill informed comments in the media in a case when the interest of the public was high, was for the court to be as open as possible and practicable, not only in relation to the trial but also in relation to the interlocutory proceedings which had to take place prior to that trial.

The other action which could be taken to reduce the risk of trial by media and the absence of cooperation between the parties affecting the conduct of the proceedings was to ensure that as soon as was practical a timetable was laid down for bringing the case to trial as early as possible and giving any directions to the parties which were necessary in order to require them to co-operate in achieving that.

The longer the trial was delayed the greater the opportunity for both sides to engage in tactical manoeuvres which had nothing to do with achieving a fair trial.

Accordingly, their Lordships refused to make the debarring order and quashed the order restricting discussion with the media.

Solicitors: Leigh Day & Co; Ashurst Morris Crisp, Simmons & Simmons.

Correct date of nuisance abatement notice

Surrey Free Inns plc v Gosport Borough Council
Before Lord Justice Simon Brown and Mr Justice Mance
[Judgment January 25]

The correct date on which both the magistrates' court and, on appeal, the crown court were to examine the justification for and validity of an abatement notice served by the local authority under section 80 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 was the date the local authority served that notice.

On an appeal from the dismissal by magistrates of an appeal against an abatement notice, the crown court had therefore been wrong to view the relevant facts as at the date of the hearing before it.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so held, allowing an appeal by case stated by Surrey Free Inns plc against the decision of Portsmouth Crown Court (Mr Assistant Recorder Anthony de Freitas and justices) on October 25, 1996, on appeal from Fareham Justices.

The abatement notice served by Gosport Borough Council on the appellant on August 25, 1995 in respect of noise nuisance at their premises known as Oliver's Bar in Gosport fell to be quashed on the ground that the crown court was concerned with the factual position at the date of the crown court hearing, when no statutory nuisance existed or was likely to occur or recur.

Mr John Bates for the appellant; Mr Hugh Merry for the local authority.

MR JUSTICE MANCE said that the crown court's view that the date at which it was relevant to consider whether a statutory nuisance existed or was likely to occur

or recur for the purposes of section 80(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 was the date of decision by the crown court.

In reaching that conclusion, that court was strongly influenced by the decision of Mr Justice Otton in *Johnson News of London v Ealing Borough Council* [(1990) 154 JP 33], holding that, on an appeal against an abatement notice made to justices under a predecessor provision to section 80(3) of the 1990 Act, the relevant date was the date the matter was before the justices.

In criminal proceedings brought under section 80(4) the question was whether the requirements of the abatement notice had been complied with. The logic of an appeal against an abatement notice was that it should consider the notice's justification and validity when served. The result in *Johnson News* did not appear to provide the simple and sensible mode of dealing with noise nuisance which was intended.

Mr Justice Otton had relied on *Cowen v City Council v Doyle* [(1981) 1 WLR 1325], a case under the Public Health Act 1936. That legislation was in different form to the 1990 Act. Section 59 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, now section 80 of the 1990 Act, introduced a markedly different framework for local authority action. An offence against section 80(3) of the 1990 Act was committed if service of an abatement notice under section 80(2) was followed, without reasonable excuse, by contravention of or failure to comply with any requirement or prohibition imposed by the notice.

The natural interpretation appeared to be that an appeal should address the situation when the

notice was served. In the present case the crown court had viewed the reasoning in *Johnson News* as applicable to a further appeal to the crown court from the magistrates' court under section 80(1) of, and paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to the 1990 Act. Thus, providing the person responsible for the nuisance had abated it, and ensured that it was unlikely to occur or recur by the time the further appeal was heard, he could have the abatement notice quashed.

His Lordship said that made probable the occurrence of anomalies relating to the commission of offences and convictions under section 80(4), and could not have been the intention of Parliament.

The crown court's decision was inconsistent with previous Court of Appeal authorities: see *Northern Ireland Trailers Ltd v Preston Corporation* [(1972) 1 WLR 203] on an abatement notice served under section 94 of the Public Health Act 1936; and *Lambeth Borough Council v Stubbs* [(1983) 25 EG 789] concerning a council tenant's notice addressed to his landlord under section 90 of the same Act.

Even if *Johnson News* were regarded as correctly decided, it could not justify the crown court's conclusion as to the relevant date.

Johnson News was wrongly decided, and the correct date at which both the magistrates' court and the crown court had to view the justification for and validity of the notice was the date when that notice was served by the local authority.

Lord Justice Simon Brown agreed.
Solicitors: Fynn & Partners, Bournemouth; Mr Richard Clayton, Gosport.

Jury may have drawn adverse inference after erroneous direction

Regina v N
Section 34 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 should not be confined to its express terms.

The best way of avoiding ill informed comments in the media in a case when the interest of the public was high, was for the court to be as open as possible and practicable, not only in relation to the trial but also in relation to the interlocutory proceedings which had to take place prior to that trial.

The other action which could be taken to reduce the risk of trial by media and the absence of cooperation between the parties affecting the conduct of the proceedings was to ensure that as soon as was practical a timetable was laid down for bringing the case to trial as early as possible and giving any directions to the parties which were necessary in order to require them to co-operate in achieving that.

because at the time of the interviews it was not known that there was seminal staining on the nightdress so the appellant was not asked to explain it.

Further, at no stage in his defence did the appellant assert a fact. His proffered explanation in evidence was not and could not be construed as a fact.

In the circumstances there was a real possibility that the appellant's conviction was secured in part by the drawing of an adverse inference following an erroneous direction.

Violence no bar

In re M (Minors) (Contact)

As a matter of principle, domestic violence could not be considered a bar to the making of an order for contact between a parent and his child.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Hale and Mr Justice Wall) so held on January 23 when dismissing an appeal by the mother against an order of Mr Recorder White, *In re Tony and Newton Abbott County Court on*

August 13, 1997 allowing the father of two children contact with them.

MR JUSTICE WALL said the matter was one of discretion, not principle.

The recorder's decision to order indirect contact between the father and the children, supervised by a court welfare officer and followed by a review in court, was not outside the generous ambit of discretion open to him.

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The College will provide the accommodation and meals. Meals will be taken in the Senior Common Room, of which Scholars will be made temporary members; and accommodation will be in single student rooms.

Applications should be addressed to the Academic Administrator, St John's College, Oxford OX1 2JF, and should include details of the proposed work to be carried out while in Oxford, as well as information on career and publications, and the name and address of one referee who has agreed to give an opinion if requested to do so. The closing date for receipt of applications is 29th March 1998.

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EDUCATION

A kind of privatisation

Simon Midgley
on the
entrepreneur
who might
help to run
state schools

Kevin McNeary, the founder and chairman of one of the private companies most likely to take a leading role in the Government's proposed education action zones, is Britain's most successful educational entrepreneur.

Two years ago his name was not familiar in the senior common rooms or, for that matter, in the business pages. A year ago that all changed when his plc, Nord Anglia Education, became the first education company to be floated on the Stock Exchange.

Mr McNeary is now, at least on paper, a multimillionaire. He returned to the media spotlight last month when the value of shares in his company soared after the Government's announcement that private companies are to be invited to help to run state schools.

Nord Anglia is widely regarded as the company most likely to play a leading role in managing at least some of the 20-strong clusters of primary and secondary schools in the 25 education action zones to be established in some deprived parts of England. Last year it had a turnover of £40 million, employed more than 1,200 people and made a profit of £2.45 million.

In some ways Mr McNeary, 54, is an unlikely entrepreneur. The Ulsterman from Keady, a Roman Catholic community in South Armagh, has come a long way since graduating from Queen's University, Belfast, in 1964 with a degree in English, economics and economic history.

Something of a drifter in his early twenties, he dabbled with journalism (the Belfast Telegraph), played trombone and bass guitar in professional dance bands and ended up teaching English in a secondary modern and then a comprehensive school, before moving into further education.

As he was scaling the career ladder in a succession of further education colleges in Leeds, Southampton and Manchester, an idea occurred to him while he was visiting a friend teaching English to Swedish students in Scarborough. He explains: "I had great fun. The students were all highly motivated. I played folk songs on the guitar and



McNeary: "Our schools should not be placed in the same category as socially divisive independent schools"

we got drunk several times. Then I thought: "This is a good idea." Mr McNeary realised that he could make a business of teaching.

In his first year, he recruited teachers and arranged accommodation for 35 Italians with families in Southport. Funding the scheme by marking GCSE scripts for five examination boards, he earned £1,300, which at two shillings and nine pence a script, was an awful lot of marking.

The next year he arranged courses for 200 students and in 1976 he left further education to move into the business full-time.

Today Nord Anglia is the market leader in TEFL in the UK — teaching about 20,000 students a year from 65 countries. It has six UK schools — in Oxford, Cambridge, London, Bournemouth, Torquay and Edinburgh, two in New Zealand and one in Washington DC. Another is about to open in Western Australia.

In the early 1980s he bought a run-down prep school in Manchester and set about turning it around. Now he owns four "pretty traditional" independent secondary schools, including Hull Grammar School, the alma mater of

William Wilberforce and Andrew Marvell, and 11 preparatory schools. In the past few years he has also opened British-style schools in Prague, Warsaw, Bratislava, Kiev and Moscow, mainly for the expatriate community.

The company is now the largest single provider of career services under contract from the Education Department and is one of the biggest private contractors to inspect primary and secondary schools for Ofsted. More than 400 inspectors will inspect 250 schools this year.

In recent years Mr McNeary has become increasingly interested in educational initiatives in the state sector. His aspiration to become involved in the education action zones is the logical culmination of that. "We are already substantially involved in supporting state education," he says. "It is not as though Nord Anglia is coming to this completely fresh from the private or business sector."

"For a number of years now, we have been inspecting large numbers of schools, training head teachers with the University of Manchester, running the careers service and doing consultancy work

for part of the World Bank. So we have an enormous number of insights into state-funded education. It's not just about a crossover of what works for the private sector.

"Our schools should not be placed in the same category as socially divisive independent schools. Many of them are not in leafy suburban, affluent areas. Many of our customers are first-time buyers and many are not even professionals. The income stream from our schools is not all that different from the kind of income stream which is available to state schools.

We would provide the same range of services to schools that local education authorities now provide at least to the same standard but probably higher and for a considerably lower figure. Some services may actually be bought in from the LEA.

"They may well be the best people to do it but in doing so we would want to ask them why they are charging a certain price and we would like to see if that price is a market price.

"We are a profit-making organisation and we would expect to make a modest profit out of our involvement in this or any other business even if it were to be publicly funded. We would expect to earn this profit

We have many insights into state-funded education

Hard to be a hit if they call you 'Miss'

Kevin Berry
on the social
problems of
being the
only man in
the staffroom

So they want more male teachers in primary schools. Good. But I wonder if "they" have considered the stresses and strains of being a male teacher in an otherwise all-female school? Men are so often in the minority in a primary school staffroom.

I worked for eight years in a small school where I was the only man. Alas, I have racked my brains for an instructive parallel but there isn't one. The sniggers and nudges — nudging from men who apparently envied my situation — soon became tiresome. I am normally cheerful, but that staffroom could be a lonely place.

Previously, I had been three years in a school with just one other male teacher, and the situation was, if anything, worse. We endured a sort of friendship forced on us by circumstance — had our circumstances been any different, mutual loathing would have kept us apart.

But back to the other school... the children, bubbling eight-year-olds, called me "Miss". All right, they did call me Mr Berry but they insisted on tagging "Miss" on to whatever they said, viz "Thanks very much, Miss", "See yah, Miss". I tried, oh how I tried, to get that tag dropped, but I remained "Miss" until I moved to another school.

Despite the welcome advances in the gender debate there has to be a time for male chat and some male bonding. No, not football or golf or an hour or two at the pub, more a male way of looking at things and exchanging shared experiences. The demands of the job are such that you make friends in teaching and, in a teacher-related world, there is so little time for hobbies and other interests where you can meet people who are in other occupations.

Being the sole male automatically precludes any firm friendships in school. I

spending his week dashing around the district, but something a little less formal.

Neighbouring schools could soon strike up arrangements whereby Mr Smith spends an afternoon, or a day, at a school not too far away. An exchange arrangement makes a refreshing change for children, at both schools, and for both teachers. A fresh face in a primary school always creates a buzz of interest.

Mr Smith might still feel isolated if he is surrounded by females, so how about some affirmative action for him? I did hear of a Lancashire town where the men primary teachers got together every Friday lunchtime for fish and chips — how I would have loved that! Is it asking too much for Inset courses to have a built-in requirement of at least three men, or even the occasional all-male course?

I recently visited a primary school in Whitley where video-conferencing is being used by a French teacher. Her lessons are linked to two remote village schools and in the near future some learning support teachers will be making use of the link.

Couldn't primary schools be making use of their male teachers in the same way?



Tom Cannon reports on the Government's plans for lifelong learning

In spite of last week's decision to scrap a long-awaited White Paper, lifelong learning remains one of the Government's clearest priorities in post-16 education. Within days of being elected, David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, set up the National Advisory Group, and one of the most talented of the junior ministers, Kim Howells, was given the brief to translate the idea into reality.

The Government's thinking will be outlined before the end of the month in a consultation document. The effort put into its preparation illustrates the difficulty of translating a fresh vision of learning into policy. The change of form is designed to widen the debate on ends and means.

The vision is clear. Rapid changes in markets, technologies, ideas and ways of working demand that people commit themselves to update constantly their knowledge, skills and competence. The agenda is blurred by the challenge lifelong learning makes to old assumptions and priorities.

The assumption that we can rely on the lessons learnt at school, college or university — with occasional reworking — to take us through life, is not only redundant but dangerous. Despite this, fewer than a quarter of all employees take part in regular job-related training. Surveys of strategic groups such as managers, teachers and technicians highlight unmet demand for training. Almost half of all 18-year-olds are not taking part in any form of education or training.

The National Advisory Group identified a priority to establish a commitment to widening and deepening participation and achievement in learning throughout life. Gaining this commitment to lifelong learning is hard. Many people simply don't understand the implications.

Why a PhD at 86 is not out of the question

Major groups were alienated by traditional education. There is inertia among workers, employers, trainers and educators. Traditional systems of support do not meet the needs of lifelong learners. Initiatives must change thinking while offering tangible returns to the learning poor who have not gained from education or training.

and the learning rich who have done well out of existing approaches. The initial focus is likely to be vocational but shifts in attitudes are as important for citizenship as employment.

Some building blocks exist. Expansion of further and higher education by 500,000 more students is part of the transformation of post-16 education from the private reserve of the few to the public property of the many. Unipart, Ford, Motorola and others have set up company-based "universities" or learning centres for employees and their families. Continuing professional development has become accepted by many groups of workers. Local initiatives such as Liverpool's City of Learning and Sunderland's lifelong learning programme extend access across communities with encouraging results.

The challenge is to build on these developments while providing a structure within which learning becomes a natural part of everyday life. Success will lead to a massive expansion of interest and demand for training and development. Failure will cripple the Government's efforts to use education as the cutting edge of national competitiveness.

New thinking is vital especially if the changes are to influence people like managers, who have a major effect on others. The University for Industry and the National Grid for Learning are flagship programmes designed to widen access and opportunity. The University for Industry will use the latest technology to expand the market for training especially to those working in small firms. The university will combine this market-making role with the brokerage of information and quality control. The National Grid for Learning extends beyond this to involve partners such as the BBC and reach more diverse groups.

Effective lifelong learning demands that people own their learning. Individual Learning Accounts — with their emphasis on creating a permanent record of training and development — provide this ownership. Employers can also use these accounts to

Traditional systems of support do not meet the needs of learners

inform their investments in training while government can focus their support to address needs and priorities.

So far, there has been little pattern or structure to these developments. In Europe, in particular, more effort has been invested in debates about definitions and turf wars than establishing policies or linking initiatives and establishing priorities.

We are in the middle of a knowledge-based industrial revolution. The ability to absorb and adapt to fresh ideas and knowledge is the primary determinant of economic success for the individual, the enterprise and the community.

It is important that certain strategic groups are reached quickly and effectively. Managers, for example, are unlikely to support employees in their lifelong learning if they are not involved themselves.

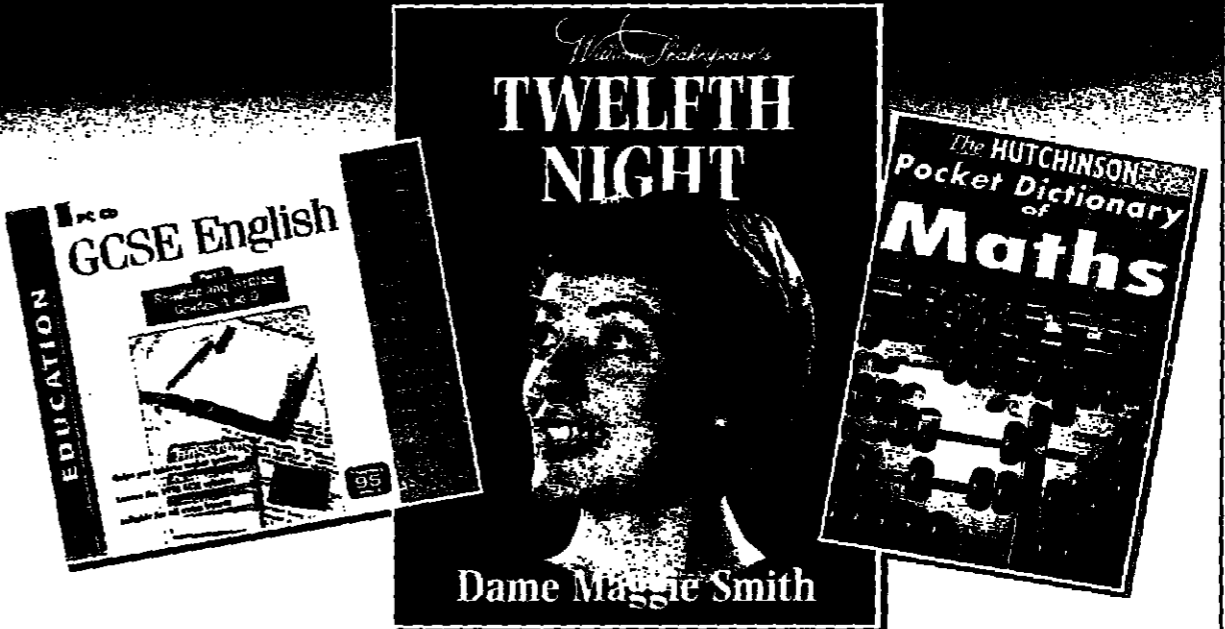
Ministers talk of a new republic of learning. If, however, they want to move beyond the soundbite they need to absorb the fundamental nature of the changes. Successful lifelong learning puts the individual in the driving seat but provides a structure of support to ensure that they sustain their effort while getting the best from new technologies and opportunities. New approaches to quality management and control are essential.

Success lies in acknowledging the unity of learning. There are more links between early learning, learning for leisure and vocational learning than policymakers admit. Some reconsideration — at least at the margins — of the funding restrictions in the 1992 Education Act will send positive signals to those in continuing education.

● The author is chief executive of the Management Charter Initiative.

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CHANGING TIMES

Winter Olympic Games: Cousins lies sixth as leaders prepare for free programme showdown

Gold on ice as men skate to extremes in pursuit of perfection

FROM ROB HUGHES IN NAGANO

IT IS raining outside and a cold and spectral mist in the mountains frustrates the downhill racers for the third time this week. They will try again today, but inside the splendid, circular White Ring, there is sport.

The short programme in the men's figure skating yesterday became an enthralling contest of athleticism, artistry and real competitive worth, and, at the end of it, three splendid skaters stand tall.

Steven Cousins, of Great Britain, having performed to the peak of his own considerable talents, lies sixth. The leading trio are men who live their lives on different planes and interpret performance in equally contrasting fashion.

His lead, however, is narrow. The man breathing down his neck is Elvis Stojko, from Canada, a rugged, almost macho performer who thrives with power and does so to oriental music accompanied by Kodo drums. The Japanese crowd, naturally, takes to him, but the judges so far are with the Russian.

Third, a man whose spins are lightning fast and whose precision is dynamic, is Todd Eldredge, who has been the outstanding male performer on ice in the United States throughout the past decade. His short programme was to the tune of Les Miserables, but there was nothing doleful or forbidding about the exuberance of his leaps.

You might begin to envisage the kaleidoscope of varying interpretations that the capacity crowd inside a purpose-built Olympic arena enjoyed last night. While temperatures fluctuated from -6C to merely -2C in a matter of an hour at the top of the downhill slope, in the White Ring it is kept to

a constant pressure by a state-of-the-art refrigeration unit. The hall is majestic, the lighting brilliant and the acoustics giving the performers perfect pitch to bring out every nuance of their themes.

A word for Cousins. He had a difficult draw yesterday, skating 21st, when both Kulik and Eldredge had set the standards, but the audience had been waiting for the crescendo of one man, Stojko, whose programme immediately followed that of the Briton. They are colleagues in the same coaching stable in Ontario and their exchange of high-fives, when Cousins departed the ring and Stojko entered, demonstrated comradeship.

Cousins, 25, has enviable British

kind that skating, like so many sports, treats them all the same, becomes a kind of lingua franca.

Kulik, however, rises above them. He wears, it has to be said, somewhat feminine clothes, and his ensemble yesterday had the lightest chiffon, draped from his shoulders as if it were wings. Other skaters can be rather brash about him and, certainly, the Frenchman, Philippe Candeloro, in fifth place, other than when, say, the Canadian judge opted to lift his compatriot by awarding Stojko a perfect six for presentation.

The differences of opinion are at least not coordinated along political lines, as in the days of the old East European fixes. However, Candeloro, who obviously still harbours hopes of at least a bronze, attempted some gamesmanship.

"I'm afraid for Todd here," he said, referring to Eldredge. "He has the pressure, and I have seen him miss under this kind of pressure. For the winner, I hope it is Elvis, because, when you win the world championship three times, you have to win the Olympics."

It is not compulsory, Stojko, a defiant carrier in his left ear, has prefaced every meeting with the press of late with bold statements that he will not conform, not give in when others try to impose their ideals on him, not be anything other than a skater of masculine



Kulik, who heads the field after the short programme yesterday at the White Ring in Nagano

virtuity. He has, however, headed the warnings to drop the karate kicks, the Bruce Lee fashion from his repertoire.

"It's not about martial arts," he now insists, "but its influence by it, it's a bunch of baloney what people say about expressing a

feminine side. I don't have a feminine side. I'm not gay, but a man can have a sense of command, and still be soft and sensitive."

He has worked at it since the age of 2, he performed his first solo at 10, his first double at 12 and the triple at 13. It is, when reaching for

the Olympic rings, the culmination of a youth consumed, a manhood obsessed with mastering technique towards perfection. An Englishman, for now, is the sixth-best Olympian at it tomorrow promises to be an uncompromising as well as captivating night on the ice.

IOC forced to back down over drugs case

FROM ROB HUGHES

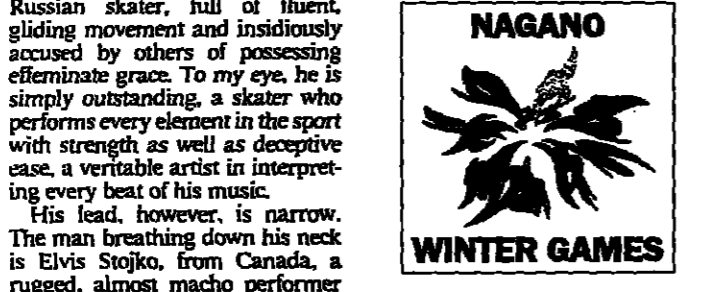
THE International Olympic Committee (IOC) was obliged yesterday to back down from its decision to strip Ross Rebagliati, the Canadian snowboarder, of his gold medal because a drugs test detected traces of marijuana in his urine.

Rebagliati, 26, had appealed, with support from the Canadian Olympic Association to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and it effectively ruled the IOC out of order.

A statement from the three-man arbitration panel, which was set up after the 1996 Atlanta Games, said: "We do not suggest for a moment that the use of marijuana should be condoned, nor do we suggest that sports authorities are not entitled to exclude athletes found to use cannabis. But if sports authorities wish to add their own sanctions to those effected by public authorities, they must do so in an explicit fashion. That has not been done here."

The panel asserted that the IOC had failed to challenge Rebagliati's claims that he had not taken marijuana since April 1997 and that it could only have entered his system through passive smoking at a party.

The IOC, with all speed, announced that it would "comply with all aspects" of the arbitration decision. Yet, by announcing its own confused state of mind over Rebagliati's guilt, the IOC has made a hash of this affair. It has highlighted an allegation of illegal use of a so-called social drug, yet shown its impotence in pronouncing proper judgment. It would seem that the IOC and the ski federations have not agreed on a specific law governing marijuana.



lines to follow, Robin Cousins, indeed, who is not related) was in the BBC commentary position. But, if this was pressure, Cousins exuded a sense of joy, losing himself in his blues music. There were no glaring errors from him; there was appreciable expression and, though he had to fight to hold the edge on his final triple jump, he did it to earn respectable marks of 5.5s for technique and presentation. The Russian judge particularly seemed to appreciate the Englishman.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

BY ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Sometimes it is important to keep one particular opponent off lead - one of the opposing hands is "safe" and the other "dangerous". This week's Refresher is concerned with this subject, commonly referred to by the ugly expression "Avoidance play".

Bridge hand diagram showing a deal with South as declarer. The diagram includes a contract of Three No-Trumps by South and a lead of three hearts. The cards are: S: T, W: T, N: T, E: T; T: T, H: T, S: T, NT: T; P: T, All Pass.

East plays the jack of hearts at trick one. You duck and East plays a second heart to his partner's queen. At trick three West clears the suit. Now you need to find a ninth trick - which will have to be a diamond - without letting West in. If East has three diamonds you can afford to play ace, king and another; on the other hand if he has Qx you should play the ace followed by a low one. How can you cater for both possibilities? Cross to dummy and lead a low diamond. If East plays the queen, duck; if he plays low, rise with the ace and go back to dummy to repeat the exercise. Again, if he plays low, rise with the ace; if he plays the queen, you duck. If East has Qx or any three diamonds you are OK.

WORD-WATCHING section by Philip Howard. Includes words like ONEIDA, OBEREK, PUTZ, ROUF and their definitions.

KEENE on CHESS

BY RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Chess for charity On Saturday February 28 I will be taking on all-comers in a simultaneous display to raise money for the Joint Effort Appeal at St George's Hospital in Tooting. Those interested in playing should contact the appeal director Lucy de Ville on 0181-725 5096.

Chess diagram showing a game in progress. White to move. The board shows pieces on various squares, with a caption 'Diagram of final position'.

Wijk end I conclude my series of reports on the prominent international tournament at Wijk aan Zee in Holland with a win by the reigning Fide champion, and his challenger from 1993, the Dutch grandmaster Jan Timman. The opponent in both cases is Paul van der Sterren, the strong Dutch grandmaster. It is indicative of the high level of such elite tournaments that such a fine player as van der Sterren should be pummeled so badly, as in these games, and finish with a mere four points out of 13 possible.

Chess analysis section titled 'Queen's Indian Defence'. Includes a chess diagram and text discussing the game between Paul van der Sterren and Anatoly Karpov.

Chess analysis section titled 'Black to play'. Includes a chess diagram and text discussing a position from the game Cao Sang - Lewin, Ukraine 1997.

Board stupid by rebel yells

The man beside me was watching the heaving grey Atlantic through half-closed eyes. Me, I felt a bit like the passive victim of marijuana smoking. "It's traveled across a thousand miles of ocean," he said softly. "You meet it and it's gone. But how can you explain, how can you explain religion to the heathen, colour to the blind? He tried, he tried. "You know those insects that mate once and die? It's like that."

I was at a surfing competition and I was talking to a surfer. The surfer was not in the competition. He had never been in any competition; he never would be in any competition. So far as he was concerned, a surfing competition was as distasteful as a love-making contest.

The passive smokers of the snowboarding fraternity are rather like that. I have been watching a good deal of the half-pipe event; I imagine I must have missed the half-split event that preceded it. I would like to be a snowboarder when I grow up, if like a crab, I could go backwards.

At least, I would like to be a snowboarder if they would let me off the clothes. But wearing the wrong clothes is clearly an important part of snowboarding. Rarely has any event in Olympic history looked quite so much like a bunch of kids

messing about and hoping that the grown-ups would get, like, you know, really upset.

And they have. Snowboarding has made the International Olympic Committee look like a bunch of out-of-touch nitwits. True, this is not the hardest task in the world. The tale of the passive-smoking gold medal-winner was followed by the story of the snowboarder sent home after trashing his hotel room, doubtless after a passive smoking binge.

I have Steve Rider to thank for that joke. When BBC sport starts making jokes about passive marijuana smoking, it is clear that Olympic snowboarding has pushed back the frontiers of sport.

In fact, many snowboarders decided to like, boycott the Olympics, man, because it's sort of like, really uncool. The rest turned up like kids unwillingly going to a parents' party, and expressing their disapproval with silly clothes and please-notice-me bad behaviour.

Both sides have their points. Snowboarding is the Groucho

Marx of winter sport: it refuses to belong to any club that will accept it as a member. Clearly, one of the essential pleasures of snowboarding is carving up people uncool enough to be on skis. After all, if you are going to be different, you need people to be different from. If skiers started to wear baggy clothes, snowboarders would switch to skidnight catsuits.

But the thing is, snowboarding is not something you compete at. It is something you do, and strive to do perfectly, rather as my friend with the surfboard said so prettily. Competition has been spatchcocked on to the pleasure of doing.

Snowboarding a half-pipe looks wonderful fun, and just the thing to wake you up after a hard night of passive smoking. But when you have a rosin-judge and an amplitude-judge, it is plain that the notion of competition is a little forced.

And - though whatever you do, don't tell the snowboarders - that is true of practically all the sports at the Winter Olympics. All are wonderful fun in

the doing. There are several industries based on the simply doing, which is I suppose why snowboarding got into the Olympics in the first place. But as activities, they are not, by nature, competitive. Competition is an afterthought. There is scarcely a single event in Nagano in which competitors go head to head. It is all against the clock or in subjectively awarded marks. They are, most of them, lovely to watch and no doubt lovely to do, but competition is not the reason for their existence.

And that is the unspoken secret of the Olympic Games: and that is what the boycotting snowboarders has been telling us. So I watch the half-pipe, and rejoice in the victory of Gian Simmen, of Switzerland. What does a Swiss rebel on a I wonder. Put his money in the wrong bank?

"They used to tell a joke in the City: what is the difference between a Eurobond and a Eurobond dealer? Eurobonds dealer. There is a snowboarding joke in here somewhere; but I'm sorry, guys. The pig's over. Boycott all you like, the Olympics have got you now. Respectability, maturity, commercial viability: all these things follow in the way of nature. And snowboarding can keep in the manner of the tennis rebel, Andre Agassi. All the way to the bank.

RESULTS AND DETAILS FROM NAGANO

Table of results and details from Nagano. Includes sections for Curling, Figure Skating, Ice Hockey, Nordic Skiing, Snowboarding, and Speed Skating. Lists winners and medalists for various events.

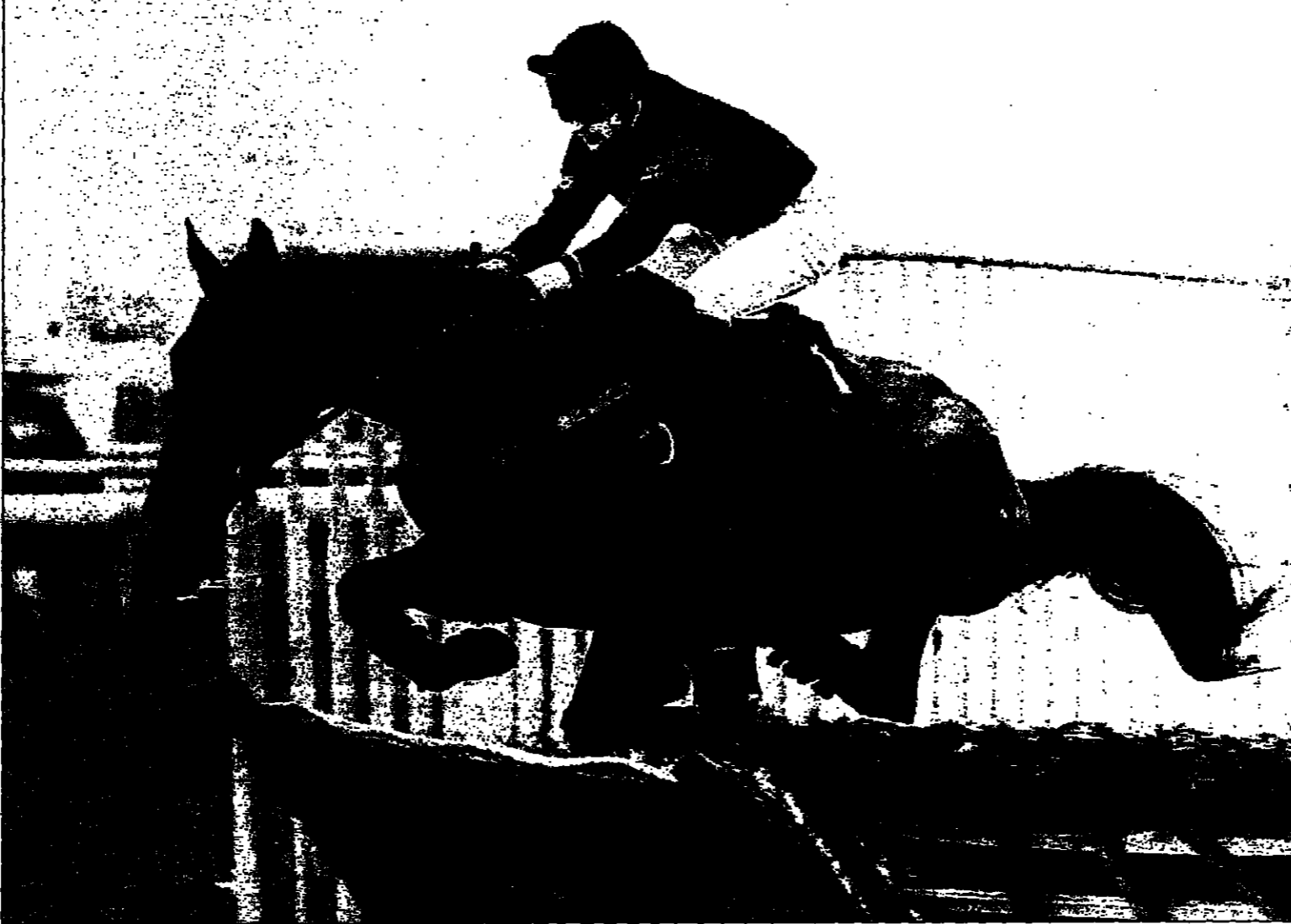
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BANGOR

RACING: IMPOSING NOVICE OVERCOMES FINAL HURDLE ON ROAD TO CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL

French Holly makes giant strides

NOT so much French Holly as... of Lebanon with his size... at Huntingdon yesterday, his three... opponents for the Sidney Banks Memorial Novices' Hurdle could muster no more than a token challenge...



French Holly, awkward at the last, quickens impressively to land the Sidney Banks Memorial Novices' Hurdle at Huntingdon yesterday

RICHARD EVANS Naps Mister Blake (3.30 Bangor) Mister Blake is proven stayer who runs particularly well at Bangor... can complete his third victory at the Welsh venue...

Sandown had been exhausting even to watch here, the field... diminished by the prudent withdrawal of Muskhill... powered cautiously in Mr Markham's wake...

speed was ideally served by the conditions. Yet it was French Holly who quickened... despite kicking the last flight out of the ground... to finish two lengths clear...

He might have done something similar to his trainer, however. It looked a decided gambler... coming here and Murphy will be relieved if he proves to have got away with it this morning...

Graphic Equaliser has been the subject of negative eleven-hour rumours... whose persistence is only matched by their vagueness...

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes races like 2.00 Decapage, 2.30 Teagan Baby, 4.00 Murray's Million.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 4.00 DENBIGH NOVICES HURDLE, 4.30 GILBERT COTTON MEMORIAL HUNTERS CHASE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 1.40 GREAT BEAR HANDICAP, 2.10 FLYING DRAGON MANDEN STAKES.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 3.10 MILKY WAY HANDICAP, 3.40 NORTH STAR HANDICAP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 2.30 EDWARD SYMONDS NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE, 3.00 BERMANS HANDICAP HURDLE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 5.00 TBR CONSTRUCTION MARES ONLY INTERMEDIATE NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 2.40 SEA GOAT CLAIMING STAKES, COURSE SPECIALISTS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 4.40 GREAT BEAR HANDICAP, RESULTS FROM YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 3.30 OLD HALL ESTATES HANDICAP CHASE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes COURSE SPECIALISTS, Wincanton, Huntingdon.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes Wincanton, Huntingdon, Lingfield Park.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 4.50 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP HURDLE.

NEWBURY

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 1.50 Zafarabad, 2.20 Hurricane Lamp, 2.50 Morstock.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes GOING GOOD, TOTE JACKPOT MEETING.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 1.50 STROUD GREEN JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 2.20 ALDERMASTON NOVICES CHASE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 2.50 HAMPSHIRE HANDICAP CHASE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 3.20 CHARLES HIGGINS MEMORIAL FOXHUNTERS CUP.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 3.50 EASTLEIGH HANDICAP HURDLE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes 4.20 FEBRUARY NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time, and Winner/Details. Includes FORM FOCUS.

RACELINE 10930 1684 NEWBURY 101 201 102 202 103 203 SOUTHWELL 103 203 6 HOUNDS 162 262

Ayr meeting in doubt THE meeting at Ayr tomorrow is in doubt because of prolonged rain. Racing could not have taken place at the track yesterday and an inspection has been called for...

Wincanton Results: 1.40 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 2.40 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 3.10 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P...

Huntingdon Results: 1.50 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 2.50 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 3.50 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P...

Lingfield Park Results: 2.00 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 3.00 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P... 4.00 (1m) 1. Oh Donna (M) A P...

حکومتنا الاصل

FOOTBALL

Hodde holds firm as critics round on England policy

By Oliver Holt, Football Correspondent

GLENN HODDE had been brave. No one can deny that. He turned Wembley into a giant laboratory on Wednesday night. But when he walked, stony-faced, into his post-match press conference...



Morley's enthusiasm for the game is undimmed, despite his advancing years and several serious injuries

Time and place ripe for Morley

Russell Kempson on a seasoned veteran enjoying one more FA Cup adventure

With kick-off only 15 minutes away, Trevor Morley and Tony Barrowcliff sped into the car park. The teams were already warming up for their FA Cup fourth qualifying-round tie...



FA CUP

Northwich planning to produce dividends

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL By Walter Gamble

NO TEAM in the Vauxhall Conference is enjoying a hotter streak of form than Northwich Victoria, who go into their match against Slough Town at the Drill Field tomorrow chasing a sixth consecutive victory...



Phil Wilson, the manager of Northwich Victoria

England Wilkins to fulfil

On Tuesday, we played Macclesfield Town in the Cheshire Senior Cup semi-final, Wilson said. They put out their first team and we held them 1-1 after extra time...

Glenn Hodde has five international matches left in which to finalise his 22-man England squad (three goalkeepers and 19 outfield players) to go to the World Cup in France. Oliver Holt continues his analysis of the race for a place after Wednesday's defeat by Chile.



Owen may be upstaged by Parkinson show

MICHAEL OWEN will remember Andy Parkinson. They played together in the forward line of the Liverpool team that won the FA Youth Cup 21 months ago. Alongside Owen, though, Parkinson suffered by comparison...

United tomorrow, when Tranmere attempt to reach the sixth round for the first time. At the very least, however, he will be on the bench. In the 3-0 win over Swindon Town on Tuesday, which hoisted Tranmere out of the Nationwide League first division relegation zone...

Redknapp frustrated in move for Ruddock

WEST HAM UNITED are negotiating with Liverpool for the transfer of Neil Ruddock, the former England defender (Matt Dickinson writes). The move has been held up by a disagreement over how the £1.5 million fee should be paid...

CRICKET: MUGGINGS OF KEY BOWLERS ADD TO INJURY CRISIS FOR TOURING TEAM DOWN TO TEN-FIT PLAYERS

Pakistan plead for delay to start of opening Test

PAKISTAN'S management last night formally asked the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCA) to postpone the first Test, which was due to start here today. As at Sabina Park in Jamaica last month, hard decisions have to be taken about the opening game of a series and talks were expected to go on long into the night trying to settle when the match could start...

England A turn to Powell as series reaches climax

ENGLAND A, who need only to avoid defeat to take the series, are planning to field three spin bowlers in the third and final unofficial Test match against Sri Lanka A that starts here today. They also intend to drop Stephen James and promote Darren Maddy to open with Nick Knight, the captain. There are expected to be four changes in all, with Jonathan Powell - ruled out of England's dramatic one-wicket victory in the second match at Matara earlier this week by an infected spinning finger - and Owais Shah making their first appearances. Powell, the off-spinner, replaces Brown, a seam bowler. Ormond comes in for Hutchinson, who hit the winning run in Matara but bowled indifferently, and Read replaces Nigh as wicketkeeper. The strategy hardly suggests that England's thoughts are defensive, but if they do not lose they will return unbeaten in first-class matches for the fourth successive year. They were last beaten in a first-class match by Nepal in January 1994. The grounds are watering the pitch and it looks as though they are trying to damp it down so that it plays well for two days before taking spin later. Mike Gatting, the England A coach, said yesterday, "I would expect it to turn more consistently than in the last game." Sri Lanka have responded by naming their strongest side of the series. They have changed captain again, the team being led this time by Hasban Tikkeratne, who has struggled for Test runs since breaking his arm in the Caribbean last year. Four other players with Test experience in a party of 14 are Sanjeewa Ratnatunga, who has recovered from illness, Chandana Hathurusingha, Doleep Samarawickrama and Prasadaya Wickramasinghe. Tikkeratne and Wickramasinghe were members of the World Cup-winning side. Sri Lanka have also retained the promising young off-spinner, Arshad Jungaid, who bowled well under pressure in the tense finale at Matara. "Jungaid has a lot of potential," Ranjit Fernando, the team manager, said. "The experience he got from the game would have boosted his confidence. He was very nervous in his first few overs, but bowled brilliantly." Several of the Sri Lankans have the additional incentive of competing for places on their country's first Test tour of South Africa, starting next month. Barry Richards, the former South Africa batsman, arrives here today to offer advice on what they can expect when they get there. ENGLAND A (probable): N V Knight (capt), D Meech, O A Shah, M A Salam, D J Gooch, G O Hobbins, C M W Read, A F Giles, J Dransfield, J C Powell, D A Cooper.

Advertisement for William Hill featuring 'FREE Binoculars!' and '3RD TEST MATCH BETTING'. It includes betting odds for West Indies vs England and lists top batsmen in first innings.

Advertisement for Cricketline featuring 'WEST INDIES V ENGLAND' and 'VERY LATEST NEWS & SCORES'. It includes the phone number 0930-161-567.

Monie aiming to stir giant from short slumber



Monie: Midas touch

Beyond the playing fields of northern England, heroic deeds in rugby league can go unnoticed. Its heroes likewise, and that is why John Monie can enter the country virtually unrecognized, yet get mobbed in Wigan. The most successful coach the British game has known is back from Australia and relishing the forthcoming season as if it was his first.

Between 1989 and 1993, Monie led Wigan to unseated heights. "It was the start of the 'We hate Wigan' era, we became that dominant," Monie said. "In the end, it was a monster for everyone outside Wigan. If I could recreate that monster, it would be marvelous, but I'm under no illusions that things have changed."

Wigan's table with silverware to overflowing never imagined when he left five years ago that he would re-enter Central Park, where he was untaunted by failure. Four league and cup doubles in successive years set impossible standards. While John Dorahy, Graeme West and Eric Hughes were successful to varying degrees, none possessed Monie's Midas touch.

Christopher Irvine on the coach whose return has reignited a town's passion and talent here, we can become as strong as any club." First time around, Monie inherited from Graham Lowe a formidable good team and, by the time he left to join the new Auckland Warriors outfit, had turned it into an unbeatable one. His dismissal by Auckland last year shook him. "In 17 years' coaching, I'd never been sacked," he said. "The great pity was that success was very close at Auckland. But I had such a good time here that it was easy to come back. I know the set-up. Wigan is a unique rugby league town and expectations are high. So are mine."

The bad habits that developed in Monie's absence are disappearing. There is a dress code, players sign in and out each day and, under Marti Hulme, one of Australia's foremost fitness conditioners, their preparations are being honed at new peaks.

It is to Jason Robinson, Gary Connolly and Andy Farrell, the Wigan and Great Britain captain, that Monie will look for responsibility and decision-making on and off the pitch. His Australian imports, Danny Moore, Mark Bell and Robbie McCormack, are experienced practitioners of solid defence and calculated risk in attack — the "winning" methods Monie holds dear.

GOLF First round to Martin in struggle for mobility

By JOHN HOPKINS GOLF CORRESPONDENT

CASEY MARTIN has gone one up in his match with the PGA Tour in the United States. The disabled professional golfer is suing the body that administers the professional game in the US in order to be allowed to use a golf cart in professional tournaments.

Coffin ruled that under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Tour was obliged to make an exception from its no carts rule for Martin, a 25-year-old who suffers from a rare circulatory disorder in his right leg that makes it extremely painful for him to walk.

This verdict had been widely anticipated in golf. Tim Finchem, commissioner of the PGA Tour, had said privately that he expected to lose in Oregon because of all the support Martin gathered from disabled rights groups throughout the country.

"I could only hope, as emotionally attached as people have become to Casey, they would understand our position," Finchem said, having testified that he could not imagine a way to allow Martin to ride a cart without that taking away from the fairness of the competition.

Martin was overcome with emotion at the end of the hearing. "I would not have done this if I thought I'd have an advantage," he said. "I hope ten years from now, if I'm still able to play golf, the PGA will learn back and scratch their heads and say 'why did we fight this guy?'"

RUGBY UNION: TEENAGER'S INCLUSION REFLECTS WOODWARD'S LACK OF OPTIONS WHILE WALES MAKE ONE CHANGE

England add Wilkinson, 18, to full squad

By MARK SOUSTER

CLIVE WOODWARD'S selection policy has invariably been dictated by ability rather than age. However, the coach's decision to include John Wilkinson, 18, the understudy to Rob Andrew as fly half at Newcastle, in the full England squad has come earlier than anyone expected — most of all the player himself.

It is encouraging that Woodward is prepared to fast-track England's finest, but his inclusion at such an early stage of his senior career reflects the dearth of top-quality, England-qualified fly halves.

Woodward made it clear that Wilkinson will not play against Wales at Twickenham next week. Nor will Andy Long, the Bath hooker, who is also in the

son and Long would feature in England's plans for the World Cup next year. "These are the young guys who it is important to highlight for the World Cup and, if I were picking for the World Cup tomorrow, they would be there," he said.

"Wilkinson, Grayson and Mark Maplenoff are the only kicking No 10s playing decent rugby, and even Wilkinson cannot get into the Newcastle side. At least he is fresh but, unless there is a series of serious injuries to key players, he will not play for England this year."

Wilkinson played in the England under-21 side that beat France last weekend — having earlier represented England schools' under-18 group with distinction. His inclusion for the build-up to the Wales game has a certain irony; it was he who dropped the winning goal that completed a junior grand slam against Wales last April.

Wilkinson was also a key member of the junior England side that burst through its way through Australia last summer, winning all eight games. Wilkinson himself scored 30 points in the opening game, against Northern Territory. That he has the ability to succeed at the highest level is not in doubt, according to Pat Lam, the Western Samoa captain, who has watched the player's development at Newcastle this season with growing admiration. Lam believes that he is in the mould of Carlos Spencer and Andrew Mehrtens, the New Zealand fly halves.

"He is a very level-headed boy who has everything. He has speed, can pass, kick, the lot. I don't want to put too much pressure on him but I've not seen such a promising fly half come out of England for a long while. He is sheer class and has all the skills," Lam said. Lawrence Dallaglio, the England captain, echoed those sentiments.



Wilkinson will not play against Wales next week, but he will gain valuable experience ahead of the World Cup next year

Charvis picked to go with the flow

By GERALD DAVIES

AFTER beating Italy in Llanelli last Saturday evening, Wales have made one change in the team to face England in their opening Five Nations Championship match, at Twickenham on February 21. Colin Charvis, the Swansea flanker, returns instead of his club colleague, Rob Appleyard, who will sit on the replacements' bench.

Charvis played in three Five Nations games last season before sustaining an injury that probably deprived him of a place on the British Isles tour to South Africa. This will be his eighth cap.

"Rob Appleyard can count himself unlucky," Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, said. "He has played well. It was a close selection in what is, for Wales, a very competitive area."

"Choosing a back row is a matter of trying to get the combination correct. The balance of the Welsh back row has been upset because of the sad departure of Gwyn Jones from the game."

Charvis has been chosen because of his ball-winning ability and the speed with which he runs when carrying the ball. "He has explosive power in both attack and defence," Bowring said. "Indeed, he could be chosen in any one of the positions in the back row of the scrum."

The choice of both Martyn Williams and Charvis reflects Bowring's commitment to an aggressive, attacking style with the emphasis on playing with the ball in hand. Both players have the instincts of an open-side flanker, which suggests that Bowring has digested the lessons of Wales's less than distinguished victory over Italy.

Wales overwhelmed the visitors in the forward exchanges, but a paucity of creative ideas meant that they struggled to make the most of their possession and, consequently, won by only 23-20.

This is one of the lessons that the home nations should have learnt from New Zealand, when they were here before Christmas, and which, on the evidence of last Saturday in

Paris, only France seem to have assimilated so far. Wales, for all their possession, were incapable of creating sufficient space for their three-quarters to take advantage.

"In order to release our backs, we need to avoid contact," Bowring said. "We played a stunning game last Saturday which, in truth, is going against the manner of our play over the last two years, when our forward play was not quite strong or consistent enough."

It would appear that Bowring needs to meld the two qualities if Wales are to have any chance of repeating their last victory at Twickenham, in 1988. He must hope that the three-quarters will blossom and that the pack will scrummage well and ensure an influential share of lineout possession.

An uncertain platform up front is no true basis upon which to develop and expand the game at international level.

"This is our biggest challenge in the Five Nations Championship," Bowring said. "The quality of possession and the speed of the early ball is essential for our three-quarters to use. This is especially so against England, who have built themselves a powerful reputation in these areas over the years."

"If doubt has suddenly crept into English minds on the basis of not having won any of their last seven games, then it is surely something — particularly after learning the lessons of the French defeat — that they will tend to rigorously in the days leading up to the next international."

TEAM

WALES: N R Jenkins (Pontypridd); I C Evans (Bath); G Bevan (Richmond); A G Jones (Swansea); G Thomas (Cardiff); A C Thomas (Swansea); R Howley (Cardiff, captain); A L Lewis (Cardiff); S H Williams (Pontypridd); D Young (Cardiff); G O Lewis (Swansea); M J Joyce (Llanelli); C L Gwynne (Swansea); M Williams (Pontypridd); I S Quinlan (Richmond); Rappaport; W T Proctor (Llanelli); L B Davies (Cardiff); P John (Pontypridd); R Appleyard (Swansea); C Stephens (Bridgend); L Muzio (Cardiff); J M Humphreys (Cardiff).

ENGLAND SQUAD

BACKS: M Catt (Bath), M Parry (Bath), D Price (Sale), A Hasty (Leicester), W Greenwood (Leicester), J Guscott (Bath), P Gilchrist (Bath), P Grayson (Northampton), J Wilkinson (Newcastle), K Brooker (Swansea), M Dawson (Northampton).

FORWARDS: J Lawrence (Haringey), D Bostock (Leicester), R Rowntree (Leicester), P Vickery (Gloucester), M Pagan (Bath), R Cochrane (Leicester), A Cunniff (Bath), M Johnson (Leicester), G Archer (Newcastle), D Greenwood (Swansea), L Dallaglio (Wigan), R Hill (Swansea), M Beck (Leicester), T Rother (Northampton), A Diprose (Swansea).

27-strong squad announced yesterday. It is a case of allowing the Newcastle man to experience the build-up to a full international, as Paul Sampson, of Wasps, did two years ago. Wilkinson, who has yet to start a game in the Allied Dunbar Premiership, and Long will then return to the under-21 team to play Wales at Worcester next Friday.

When he learnt of his rapid elevation, Wilkinson said: "I had no idea I was in the running. I am very, very surprised but also elated. It is, obviously, a major step up."

Woodward said that both Wilkin-

"He is very talented. I'm sure he'll go all the way," Dallaglio said. "He has got the priceless ability of being able to put the ball between the posts and, after Paul Grayson, there are not many No 10s in England who can do that."

Long is one of four hookers included in the provisional squad, which will be whittled down next Tuesday, when the team is expected to be announced. Dorian West is the

one casualty from the squad that met France last Saturday.

George Chuter, 21, of Saracens, continues his rapid rise — although he, too, will return to the A side. Mark Regan and Richard Cockerill, who missed the game in Paris through injury, complete the complement. The other 21 from the opening Five Nations defeat are retained, with the addition of Tim Rodber and Matt Dawson.

HOCKEY

Reading hoping to cut deficit

By SYDNEY FRESKIN

THE pick of the premier division matches in the men's National League on Sunday is the meeting between Reading, the title-holders, and Canconk, who are three points clear at the top of the table.

When these teams met on January 18 at Canconk, Reading won 4-2 and now, as the hosts, they appear to have the advantage. However, Martin Gibboly, the Canconk manager, said yesterday: "We are better prepared than we were last time."

Canconk have recorded sweeping victories over Southgate, Teddington and East Grinstead, but Reading have kept up the chase and will be keen to reduce their six-point deficit on the leaders.

The quality of the match will depend on how the players react to their exertions at the England training camp that ended yesterday — involving nine of the Canconk squad and four from Reading.

Welton face weekend to remember

By CATRY HARRIS

WELTON has never faced a weekend quite like this. Tomorrow they take on Sheffield, their fellow strugglers, in a crucial match in the women's North League first division, and on Sunday they entertain Hightown, the holders and Premiership club, in the quarter-finals of the EHA Cup at their ground near Hull.

Fiona Green, the Welton captain, said: "It is the opportunity of a lifetime for the players. It's a non-league side against one of the best in the country, a repeat of the Shevenage versus Newcastle football clash."

The club is buzzing at the prospect of facing the three-time cup winners and former European Cup Winners' Cup holders. The appearance of Tina Cullen, the England and Great Britain striker, has generated most excitement and Green admitted that most of the team had volunteered to mark her.

Green said: "We don't intend going down without a fight and we've been working on some different tactics."

Victory over Sheffield will give them just the boost they need. "We're terribly excited about the cup tie, but our priority is the league because the club's survival depends on it," Green said. "We want to stay in the first division — it's taken us a long time to get there and we don't want to have to start all over again."

FOR THE RECORD

Table with columns for BASKETBALL, CYCLING, FOOTBALL, CRICKET, HOCKEY, SAILING, TENNIS, RUGBY UNION, SNOKER, and ICE HOCKEY. Each section lists various sports events and results.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Table listing today's fixtures for FOOTBALL, RUGBY LEAGUE, and OTHER SPORT.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Injury forces Becker out of tournament

TENNIS: The Dubai Open is not a happy hunting ground for Boris Becker (Alfred Ramsay writes). For the second consecutive year he has been forced to withdraw just as he thought he was getting into his stride. Last year it was a recurrence of an old wrist injury, this time it is a strained abdominal muscle that could keep him away from the courts for several weeks.

Becker sustained his latest injury while playing doubles with Tim Henman on Wednesday and decided that he would have to pull out of his scheduled match with Felix Mantilla in the second round of the singles. "On my groundstroke it is fine, but it is impossible to smash or serve the ball," he said. "It is impossible for me to play a proper match."

Cayard keeps control

SAILING: EF Language was holding on to her lead 25 miles ahead of Swedish Match in the fifth leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race yesterday, but Paul Cayard, her skipper, was having to temper his competitive nature in westerlies gusting to more than 50 knots about 1,000 miles west of Cape Horn. On the second leg, from Cape Horn to Fremantle, Cayard pushed unceasingly and the toll on equipment eventually allowed Sisk Cut to sail past him.

England victorious

BOWLS: The England trio of Andy Thomson, Tony Allcock and John Ottaway surprised Australia in the first of three international matches at the Merrylands indoor bowls club, Sydney, yesterday, winning in all three disciplines — singles, pairs and triples. Don Sherman, the Australia team manager, had been predicting a 3-0 whitewash — but in his team's favour.

Afleck home and dry

GOLF: Paul Afleck, of Wales, leads the Alfred Dunhill PGA Championship at Houghton in Johannesburg after a first day that was cut short by rain and lightning. Afleck, one of only 51 players in the 156-strong field to complete 18 holes, had a five-under-par 67 and leads by one stroke from Anders Forsbrand, of Sweden, Costantino Rocca, the Italian Ryder Cup player, and Roger Wessels, a local professional.

صحة من الاموال

Atherton upbeat on eve of third Test against West Indies



Atherton, left, and Botham keep a watching brief during the final practice session yesterday. Photograph: Laurence Griffiths/Allsport

THERE is no good time and no good way to lose a Test match, but there are different degrees of bad. England this week chose one of the worst and their catharsis has been painful. First through rest, then through frank confession of failings and at last, yesterday, by picking up bats and balls again. England hope that they are ready to go back among the sour memories this morning.

England resolve to repair damage

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN PORT OF SPAIN

It will not be easy and they know it. The imposition of successive Tests on the same ground would always heavily favour whichever team won the first, and the manner of their victory last Monday, dredged from the murky probabilities of defeat, has visibly energised West Indies.

the game last week, when no watering was permitted and the policy of flooding it on Monday afternoon has fallen foul of the overcast, drizzly weather ever since.

Bryan Davis, the pitch coordinator, said that it was behind schedule. "The weather has prevented it drying out as quickly as we planned and there will certainly be some moisture there for the first day," he said. "I would say bowling first is usually advisable here, but it certainly will be so tomorrow."

England must return to Queen's Park Oval knowing that they not only should have won the second Test, but also that they could easily have won their past three here — and this on the ground where West Indies remain undefeated since 1977.

England will not relish a game that could easily be dictated by the toss, especially as Michael Atherton may feel that he is due to lose one.

Atherton said that many of the players had found the recent game "one of the most draining Tests they have played". It was sensible management, physically and psychologically, to enforce a two-day rest period that ended in a team meeting late on Wednesday.

"We were pretty honest with ourselves," Atherton said. "Bumble [David Lloyd, the coach] said what needed to be said. There were some obvious things, things we all knew, but it had to be got into the open. Nobody was hiding behind excuses. We felt we threw the game away and we recognise that we lost the game rather than West Indies winning it. It was a great match and there is no disgrace in the defeat, but eight times out of ten we would have won."

has been intense and fingers of reproach have been pointed at the two new-ball bowlers. Dean Headley and Andrew Caddick, both are likely to survive in an unchanged side. In part, this is through the lack of cricket offered to the rest of the squad and in part a show of faith that will not be repeated if they err again.

Atherton identifies a degree of complacency that crept into England's cricket from the fourth morning onward and it is this that the management will be seeking to eradicate. "I don't think we bottled that game," he said, "we just didn't play with enough conviction over the last day and a half."

Caddick, in particular, must stop believing that the world in general, and umpires in particular, are conspiring against him. He must forget the scatter-gun bowling that drove his captain to despair and recapture the spirit of the Oval, when his probing control and ability to extract extra bounce contributed to a memorable win over Australia in August. If he does, then another victory can follow here.

the players had found the recent game "one of the most draining Tests they have played". It was sensible management, physically and psychologically, to enforce a two-day rest period that ended in a team meeting late on Wednesday.

England's one serious doubt involves Adam Houlbooke, who has a back strain. He was still stiff yesterday, though he bowled and batted in a practice session overseen by Ian Botham, and a decision on his fitness will not be made until this morning.

If he fails to recover, opportunity will surely beckon for Mark Ramprakash. There is no doubt that Ramprakash has the better credentials. Typically, for one on whom fortune has not smiled so far, he took a blow on the arm at nets yesterday — from a ball bowled by Butcher.

TELEVISION CHOICE

Hasselhoff at home



Fame and Fortune Channel 5, 8.00pm The Hello! magazine of the air is back, with David Hasselhoff heading the parade of the rich and famous who have agreed to let the camera into their homes. All those years as the strapping lifeguard in Baywatch have enabled Hasselhoff to buy a huge mansion in Californian mock-colonial where he lives with his stunning wife and young daughters. Sorry about the adjectives but the tone of the commentary can't be catching. All surman and fixed grin, Hasselhoff declares a simple philosophy: "I know what the public wants. It's my challenge to give it to them." This big idea has served him well, though he does admit that when Knight Rider finished after nearly 100 episodes he was out of work for three years. Tune in to the rerun of the show on this very channel and you may begin to understand why.

Ellen Channel 4, 9.00pm The episode we are all waiting for is the one in which Ellen DeGeneres's bookstore manager Ellen Morgan comes out as a lesbian. This is still some way off but there is no harm in looking for tell-tale signs. But apart from a glimmer of a hint during a pre-credit visit to a therapist, our heroine is clearly determined to keep us in suspense. True, she sits out in the habit of wearing frocks or dating men but that is hardly evidence. We will have to continue to make do with the show as we have come to know it, an amiable if lightweight affair in which a few jokes are stretched a long way. Tonight the principal fun comes from Ellen and her boss, Ed, childishly trying to upstage each other, first in the bowling alley and then the pool table. DeGeneres's glorious smile continues to light up any dull material.

Mortimer's Law BBC1, 9.30pm After last week's lengthy preamble explaining why she gave up a healthy barrister's job in London to become a coroner in rural mid-Wales, Amanda Root's Rachel Mortimer gets down to work. She could probably wish for better support than a fussing landlady (Gwenyth Pety) and a police assistant (Nicholas McLaughlin) who thinks the job is beneath him, but she is a tough lady. As her first is a man found dead in the freezer room of a butcher's shop, apparently training for an expedition to the Arctic. Her second body (thankfully the camera spares us the details) is horribly mutilated after being caught in a machine at work. David Reid's script offers few surprises but Mortimer's Law has the makings of a serviceable drama which is aimed squarely at the middlebrow market and likely to hit it.

Chat with Parkinson (BBC1, 10.20pm) Parkinson (BBC1, 10.20pm) It was a risk bringing the old boy back after such a long gap but it has paid off, at least for those of us tired of chat shows where the host thinks himself for in the case of Mrs Merton herself more important than the guests. If the Parkinson formula of choosing natural raconteurs and giving them their heads is old-fashioned, so be it. So far the show has tended to play safe by recruiting proven performers such as Elton John, Billy Connolly and Michael Palin, whom Parkinson could well have interviewed 20 years ago and in some cases did. But tonight his guests are not only from a younger generation but outside the familiar chat show repertory company: Robbie Williams, formerly of Take That, and Ewan McGregor, of Trainspotting, Shallow Grave and, for one episode, ER.

RADIO CHOICE

Law in Action Radio 4, 8.50pm Tonight's programme examines a recent survey for Community Care magazine about the relationship between the law and disadvantaged people. The survey uncovered some disturbing evidence, including the claim that disadvantaged people are especially vulnerable to certain crimes because they have a reputation for not pursuing cases in court. The reason, according to the survey, is that the police believe they lack credibility as witnesses. Some workers are convinced that the criminal justice system works against the interests of the disadvantaged. Marcel Berins asks how that situation can be changed without compromising the broader requirement to have cases properly heard and evidence properly given.

One Mo' Time Radio 2, 7.00pm I am a slave to the readers' most interests, so on Friday the 13th I feel an obligation to find an antidote in the portents of the date, not that any of us are superstitious of course. Just in case. One Mo' Time is a jolly programme to start the evening, the beginning of a six-part series on the contribution made by black performers to the musical life of America, particularly the musical "The Color Purple". The presenter and the first programme has some cracking names in it, including Adelaide Hall, Duke Ellington and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. There is of course another side to the story: the different attitude that used to be taken to black customers as opposed to black performers. Peter Barnard

RADIO 1

6.30am Kevin Greening and Zolt Ball 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whitey. Includes 12.30pm Newsbeat 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 3.00 Chris Tarrant. Includes 3.45pm Newsbeat 6.00 Pat Torgeson 6.55pm Newsbeat 7.00 Radio 1 Rap Show 7.00pm Fabio and Grooverider 8.00 Charlie Jordan

WORLD SERVICE

6.00am Newsday 6.30 Europe Today 7.00 News 7.15 Off the Shelf. Lethbridge with Innes 7.30 Best on Record 8.00 News 8.15 People for Thought 8.30 News 8.50 News 9.00 News 9.15 The Learning World 9.30 English: The Art of Writing 9.45 Sports Roundup 10.00 Newsday 10.30 Assignment 11.00 News 11.15 Newsday 11.30 Newsday 11.45 Newsday 12.00 Newsday 12.15 Newsday 12.30 Newsday 12.45 Newsday 1.00 Newsday 1.15 Newsday 1.30 Newsday 1.45 Newsday 2.00 Newsday 2.15 Newsday 2.30 Newsday 2.45 Newsday 3.00 Newsday 3.15 Newsday 3.30 Newsday 3.45 Newsday 4.00 Newsday 4.15 Newsday 4.30 Newsday 4.45 Newsday 4.55 Newsday 5.00 Newsday 5.15 Newsday 5.30 Newsday 5.45 Newsday 5.55 Newsday 6.00 Newsday 6.15 Newsday 6.30 Newsday 6.45 Newsday 6.55 Newsday 7.00 Newsday 7.15 Newsday 7.30 Newsday 7.45 Newsday 7.55 Newsday 8.00 Newsday 8.15 Newsday 8.30 Newsday 8.45 Newsday 8.55 Newsday 9.00 Newsday 9.15 Newsday 9.30 Newsday 9.45 Newsday 9.55 Newsday 10.00 Newsday 10.15 Newsday 10.30 Newsday 10.45 Newsday 10.55 Newsday 11.00 Newsday 11.15 Newsday 11.30 Newsday 11.45 Newsday 11.55 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Men's skaters lift their art to new planes

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CRICKET 50

Atherton plays up England's chances of victory



Vialli appointed as successor after Dutchman is abruptly dismissed as manager

Chelsea call Gullit's bluff

Proud man who commands players' respect

Brian Glanville on Gianluca Vialli, the new man in charge at Stamford Bridge

By Matt Dickinson

RUUD GULLIT appeared one of life's winners, a man for whom nothing could go wrong, but a dramatic game of brinkmanship blew up in his face yesterday. Make no mistake, the Dutchman did not resign, he was sacked acrimoniously by Chelsea, his massive pay demands appearing to bring to a head months of uncertainty over his long-term plans.

World Cup this summer and Gullit is understood to be top of the Dutch federation's wanted-list. He has been studying for the Dutch coaching qualification. The Chelsea board was under pressure to make a decision after representations from backroom staff, worried that they could lose their jobs should Gullit abruptly leave, and it is understood they found the uncertainty impossible to withstand last week when Gullit asked the club to pursue the purchase of Brian Laudrup from Rangers.

press conference this morning, but he was already disputing Chelsea's version of events last night. "I was only asked to attend one meeting in the last six months to discuss the future," he said. "This meeting took place last Thursday when Colin Hutchinson and I talked very amicably about a two-year extension to my contract."



Gullit holds the FA Cup aloft after Chelsea's victory over Middlesbrough in May

Oblivious to his impending departure, Gullit wore his characteristic, laid-back smile at training yesterday morning, but it was wiped off his face in remarkable scenes soon afterwards. His shock at his dismissal was such that he stormed out of a meeting with Colin Hutchinson, the managing director, before he could be told that his successor was to be Gianluca Vialli, Chelsea's Italian striker. He has been appointed player-manager until the end of next season, with the option of a two-year extension to his contract as a manager only, although he could play in emergencies.

Hutchinson, speaking at a press conference at Stamford Bridge, said: "Unfortunately, while we were prepared to give Ruud a contract which we believe would have made him the best-paid manager in the Premiership, we were not able to meet what he wanted and expected. We simply could not afford what he was asking."

"The delay had become potentially damaging. Back-

Conflicting stories emerged last night, with Gullit adamant that he intended to sign a new two-year deal and claiming that he only heard of his dismissal through the media. "It is incorrect for Chelsea to claim they tried to negotiate for three months — there were no negotiations," he said.



Vialli: hinted at rift

His statement, however, seemed at odds with events this season, when he had repeatedly appeared to be stalling. The problems were compounded for Chelsea last Thursday when, having finally got him to the negotiating table, he presented pay demands — believed to be as high as £2 million per year — that the club regarded as totally unrealistic. Moreover, there was a dispute over the conditions of the contract, the club insisting that Gullit retired as a player.

room staff with mortgages to pay... could not be sure they would be in a job. We had taken the unique step of guaranteeing them an extra year should Ruud leave and his successor not require them. For various reasons, for months Ruud did not want to sit down and take things forward. For the good of the club and planning for next season, the situation had to be resolved. We could not afford to be in limbo."

There was also concern within Chelsea that Gullit was keeping his options open regarding other jobs. Guus Hiddink, the coach of the Holland national side, is expected to stand down after the

Chelsea are second in the FA Carling Premiership, but have won only three of their previous 11 league games and there were increasing rumours of unsettled players.

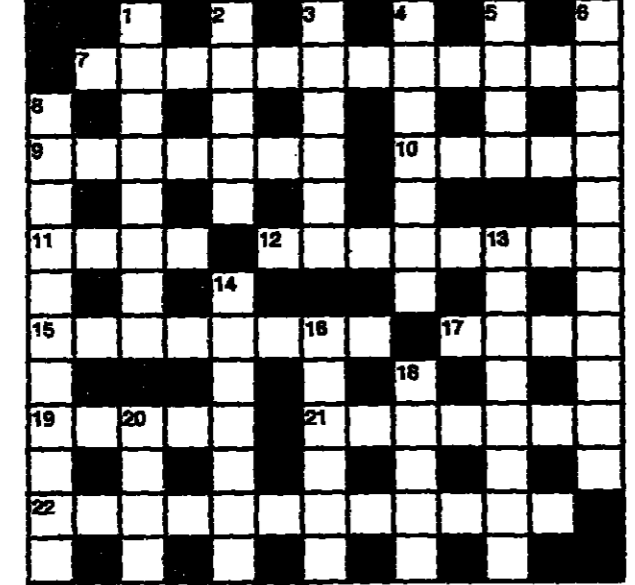
Gullit was alleged to favour some players while ignoring others, and none suffered more than the man who is now his successor, Vialli. The former Italy striker was regularly left out of the team, despite being the club's leading goalscorer and he hinted strongly yesterday at the rifts that had built up.

"I want to improve the relationship between the manager and the players," Vialli, hugely popular among the Chelsea players, said. "An open, honest and even blunt relationship is the key. It is about maturity. I would like to improve the team spirit, to make the players more motivated and increase their enthusiasm. I will let the players know why I make decisions, which is very important."

His first game in charge will be the second leg of their Coca-Cola Cup semi-final against Arsenal at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday, when Chelsea must try to pull back a 2-1 deficit. With Gullit due to hold court today, however, the intervening days may be full of much more controversy.

Hoddle holds firm, page 48
Morley's Cup goal, page 48

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



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Ruud boy who helped football to shed its roughhouse image

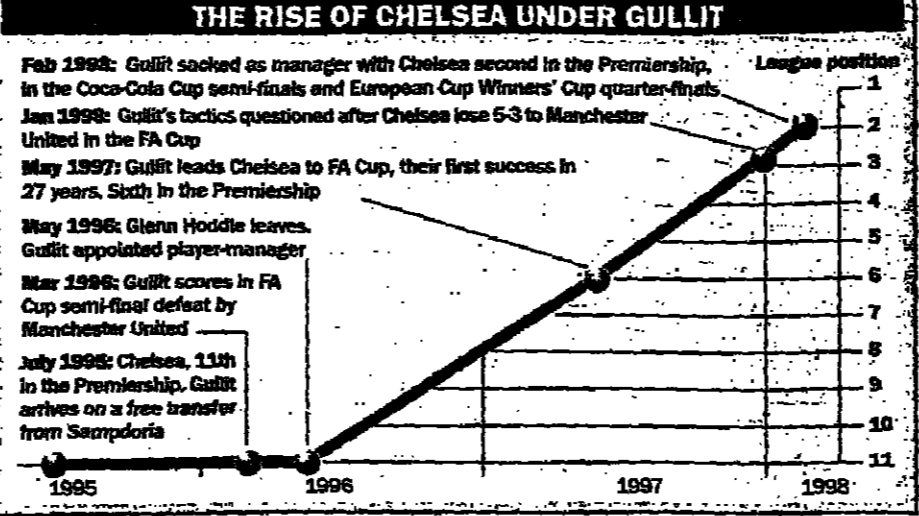
By Oliver Holt, Football Correspondent

A FEW weeks ago, with Ken Bates, I walked around the Chelsea Megastore, the great monument to football commercialism that Ruud Gullit helped to build. We stopped here and there, first at the garden gnomes decked out in Chelsea colours that are the bestsellers, then in the corner where some clothes with minimalist designs hung. "That's Ruud's stuff," Bates said. "Bloody expensive."

Gullit has been many things during his 2½ years in England, but he was not cheap. If his talents as a manager, tactician and motivator have not yet been given enough time to be judged, he was undoubtedly one of the most lavish talents and dynamic personalities ever to grace English football, a man whose influence in the domestic game spread far beyond the Chelsea Megastore.

It was when Hoddle left, though, that Gullit's influence began to intensify. It was him and his reputation, as well as Chelsea's handsome wages, that brought a galaxy of exotic names to the club, names that would not have been tempted there if it not for him. The presence of Gianfranco Zola, Gianluca Vialli and Roberto di Matteo in the Chelsea side gave them a glamour that no other team in England, not even Manchester United, could match.

Le Saux, Gullit's ability to keep attracting the big names and Chelsea's continuing willingness to wave wads of cash around showed no signs of diminishing. Now that he is gone, though, the debate is bound to begin to rage about whether this man, who peers out at us from the covers of magazine after magazine, was more style than substance. The appointment of Vialli as his successor suggests that Chelsea's priority is continuity of reputation, a big name at the helm to keep attracting the best stars, to send out a signal that the glamour has not died with the Ruud Boy.



There is no doubt that Gianluca Vialli is a footballer of magnetic appeal, not only to the fans who follow him, but to his fellow players. There is no doubt that he is a proud and powerful character. No doubt, either, of his enormous playing experience, especially with Sampdoria, his favourite club, and Juventus.

another three when Tromso came to Stamford Bridge. Yet all this has not been enough to assure him a regular place. His travails, of course, began when Chelsea signed his compatriot, Gianfranco Zola. Gullit, at first, speculated on playing three men up but it did not work. It became clear that, for all Vialli's prowess and prestige, the ideal attacking couple was Zola and Mark Hughes.

The players will certainly respond to him as player-manager, initially at least. They have always felt substantial affection for him. There was that day at Stamford Bridge when Dennis Wise, Chelsea's ebullient midfielder, went to the bench, pulled up his blue jersey and displayed a T-shirt inscribed with "Cheer up Luca, we love you".

Vialli is hard to pigeon-hole and can be provoked at violence by ill-treatment. There was once a tussle in a Leicester house with an opponent who had been kicking him too often. However, he does have stature and intelligence. He has learnt English well and if Kenny Dalglish and Gullit can instantly make the step from player to manager, perhaps Vialli can do it, too.

Overall, he has been enormously respected, about his treatment by Ruud Gullit. This season things have gone somewhat better, he has made more appearances in the Chelsea team and spent less time on the bench. Gullit's rise of what Italians call "the turnover," an endless shuffling of first-team pool players, could, for one of Vialli's stature, be compared with what Fyodor did to his unfortunate dogs. Alarming stimuli may work for some players, but when a player is a leading figure, it is a very doubtful strategy.

At various times this season Vialli has scored four goals away to Barnsley, two late goals of vital importance in the driving snow of Tromso, Naples. It was a barrage of objection from the press. Subsequently, transferred to Juventus, he was forced by their manager, Gianni Trapattoni, to play in midfield. Later came the prolonged stand-off with Angelo Sacchi, the Italy manager.

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